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CORRESPONDENCE

MONDALE ON FARRAKHAN

To the editors:

In TNR's editorial of April 30 ("The Rainbow's End"), several assertions are made that must be corrected.

You say that Senator Hart and I have "done the minimum that decency requires" in our responses to various threats and statements made by Louis Farrakhan and to the relationship between Mr. Farrakhan and the Rev. Jesse Jackson. You add that Senator Hart and I "have not yet met the requirements of social and political morality, which are stricter than those of decency."

Not only have I condemned Mr. Farrahkan's statements, I have done so repeatedly, in the strongest terms, and from the very beginning. When Mr. Farrakhan's threats against a *Washington Post* reporter first came to light, I condemned his remarks as an outrage, and urged that my fellow Presidential candidates do likewise. Similarly, when Mr. Farrakhan made his comment that Hitler was a "great" man, I criticized it as appalling and unacceptable. I have stated that all of us, including Mr. Jackson, should repudiate Mr. Farrakhan.

Mr. Farrakhan's words and attitudes have absolutely no place in our political process, and it is the duty of all candidates to make that clear. Several days after Senator Hart and I were both quoted in the *Post* condemning Mr. Farrakhan's threats, Vice President Bush tried to create the impression that neither of us had spoken out on the issue. In fact, Mr. Bush was initially silent, and to my knowledge, President Reagan has to date said nothing in public on the subject.

I intend to speak out against statements and policies that run counter to the goal of racial, religious, social harmony, whether they are by Louis Farrakhan, Ronald Reagan, or anyone else.

WALTER F. MONDALE
Washington, D.C.

WHAT'S DOING?

To the editors:

Were reason and strategic planning conducive to peace in the Middle East, your analysis in "Nothing Doing" (TNR, April 9) would stand as a model statement of American failures. But in the realms of fear and greed, the catastrophe in Lebanon actually bodes well for Israel, Maronite Christians, and southern Lebanon. For in the territory now under Israeli control, the influx of Christians in the months ahead is likely to surge, the local population of Arabs is likely to behave much like that of the West Bank, and the freedom from sabotage in Galilee will continue undiminished. This alliance, in turn, is certain to modify the attitudes of those in Western Europe and America who may have cooled in their support for Israel or maintained a scarcely concealed hostility. The alliance of Christian and Jews to safeguard their lives, their interests, and their faiths may, in fact, encourage support more solid than either Israel or Lebanon has ever enjoyed before.

EUGENE GREEN
Brookline, Massachusetts

TV GUIDES

To the editors:

Paul Attanasio is up to his poop deck in malarkey when he sails into the PBS "MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour" in "Anchors Away" (TNR, April 23). It annoyed me little when he cut loose at the helmsmen of the three major news networks after "watching religiously for a solid month." But when he rammed into MacNeil/Lehrer's "comforting through boredom; news drowns in a slough of passionless debates between gasbags drawn from a routine spectrum of opinion," I'd had it.

The "MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour" has been on the air for about seven months, and I have watched through all seven of them. This in-depth news presentation is television broadcasting on its highest level. If members of Congress, governors, cabinet members, heads of state, and Presidential candidates are gasbags, so be it. I find this program a lifesaver in a sea of mediocrity.

MAX E. ROBKIN
Atlanta, Georgia

To the editors:

I must complain about your cavalier attitude toward television. Each week we are given extensive reviews of movies by Stanley Kauffmann, who must be one of the best reviewers in the business. On the other hand, you blast television every few months. Not that it doesn't need it, but, as a medium, I find it far more important than movies. It is part of my daily life, even though I am quite picky about my viewing. Why can't TNR find someone who deals with TV somewhat like Ron Powers does on "Sunday Morning," the CBS Charles Kuralt show? He analyzes it very well, I think. And he gives it a pasting—often. I submit that such a potent media merits weekly attention by someone who doesn't get indigestion watching once every six months.

JEANNETTE VEATCH
Mesa, Arizona

THE CHAMBERS LEGACY

To the editors:

John Judis's timely essay on the President's debt to Whittaker Chambers ("The Two Faces of Whittaker Chambers," TNR, April 16) neatly identifies the main source of tension between Mr. Reagan's outlook and his actions. Mr. Judis may be too sanguine, however, when he leaves us with the impression that Reagan can maintain this tension through a second term.

Most ominous is a root weakness of midcentury anticommunism. Mr. Chambers's life was spent serving and then denouncing Communist doctrine and Soviet power. His "conservatism" consisted mainly in broadening that denunciation, until it included the whole modern project which descends from the Enlightenment. The force of Chambers's indictment of liberal humanism stemmed less from his religious beliefs than from his horror of the Russians. Chambers's "theology" was a deduction from his political loyalties; it was not their premise. "Disraeli realism" notwithstanding, his utopian logic pointed in a single direction: eliminate the Soviets, and all will come right.

Domestically, a reelected President Reagan would continue to compromise. But he inherits a teaching that regards foreign affairs as a realm of abstractions and absolutes, where the need for compromise is questionable or temporary. So far he has honored this teaching mainly in the breach. American voters now need to ask themselves whether they can afford to give him four more years in which to "win one for Whittaker."

LARRY TOOL
Pleasant Hill, California

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FROM WASHINGTON

HOME TRUTHS

> About two weeks ago President Reagan was in Texas, and while here he said we ought to consider abolishing the deductibility of home interest from our taxes. . . . That I believe is the worst single idea around in tax law. . . . That is the only deduction that is in the tax law at all that does any good at all for the average American.

Thus Walter Mondale in the Dallas candidates' debate May 2, using his signature rhetorical device of whiny hyperbole ("worst single idea . . . only deduction . . . any good at all") to exploit a recent Reagan gaffe. The dictionary meaning of "gaffe" is a social error or faux pas. The term probably entered politics courtesy of newspaper headline writers, who have a professional need for words of few letters. Of course "lie" has even fewer letters than "gaffe," but lies by politicians are not news. A "gaffe" is the opposite of a "lie": it's when a politician inadvertently tells the truth.

It doesn't take much to commit a gaffe. All that Reagan said, in answer to a question about the mortgage interest deduction, was:

> I want them to look in the area of simplification at everything. Let's study everything that can be done. Now, would there be any harm if—and this is theoretical. . . . But if we could have a tax simplification . . . and if that included such things as eliminating some things that today are deductibles, would that not resolve the problem, if we had an entirely different type of tax structure with a quite low rate?

Said Mondale the next day: "I've learned to expect at least one goofy proposal a week. . . . If you take that away, they ['the average working American'] are not going to be able to afford a home or housing, that's it." Of course demagoguery by politicians is also not news, but Mondale ought to reflect on a couple of things before he proceeds any further down this path.

First, whereas Reagan has only asked, in the most timid possible way, for a theoretical discussion of the subject, Mondale himself, whether he knows it or not, is on record in support of a severe cutback in the home mortgage interest deduction. Mondale has endorsed the Bradley-Gephart "Fair Tax" bill, the leading Democratic tax reform proposal. (Gary Hart supports it too.) Bradley-Gephart has tax rates from 14 percent to 30 percent. Though it retains a few traditional deductions, including home mortgage interest, these apply only against the 14 percent basic tax rate. The most anybody can deduct, in short, is fourteen cents on the dollar, which is far less than most mortgage holders deduct now.

Second, the home mortgage interest deduction is not, as Mondale portrays it, a little guy's tax break. Like many such government arrangements, it sprinkles enough benefits down into the middle class to create a political constituency, while reserving its most generous gifts for the affluent and ignoring the poor almost completely. Two-thirds of all taxpayers don't itemize their deductions, and therefore aren't even eligible for this goody. Sixty percent of homeowners—38 percent of homeowners with mortgages—don't take the deduction. Of those who do take it, higher-income people benefit most for the obvious reasons that they own more expensive homes (or even several homes) and are in higher tax brackets, where they save more per dollar deducted.

The mortgage interest deduction is expected to cost the Treasury about $23 billion this year. In the May 2 debate, Mondale defended it as a boon to people making less than $30,000 a year—his cutoff for "the little guy." But according to a 1981 Congressional Budget Office study, about three-quarters of the benefit from this deduction went to the one-fifth of all taxpayers making *more* than $30,000.

No matter who wins the fall election, there is going to be (or at least there had better be) a major effort at tax reform, with two goals in mind. The first goal is to simplify the system and reduce marginal rates. The more deductions that are eliminated or cut back, the lower tax rates can be. President Reagan was clearly right that we should "look . . . at everything," and it's shabby of Mondale to be scoring points off this minimally sensible remark (which Reagan's advisers have hastened to prevent him from amplifying).

Reagan himself has been disingenuous about the second goal, which is reducing the deficit. Obviously, tax reform won't raise much new revenue unless it is also a tax *increase*. Reagan, Mondale, and Hart all know this, but all avoid making it clear. Making it clear would be a gaffe. Nevertheless, the main reason tax "reform" suddenly has such momentum is that the pols realize it is the only way to sneak through the major tax increase we need.

In spirit, tying a tax increase to reform is a good idea. What bothers people about taxes is not the feeling that they're paying too much, but the feeling that they're getting gypped because the guy next door isn't paying his share. Addressing this resentment would make a tax increase easier to swallow. But it is fairly breathtaking to read Charls E. Walker, quoted in the April 16 *Newsweek* on the subject of tax reform, saying, "The system we've got is lousy."

Charls Walker is more responsible than any single person, including Ronald Reagan, for our present fiscal dilemma. He is the business lobbyist who engineered the various tax breaks for corporations and rich people that were enacted in 1978 and 1981. Having bled the Treasury dry with these schemes, he is now shocked—shocked!—to discover that the government is running a huge deficit. Walker is in the midst of a nationwide campaign to build support for what he is calling a "tax on business transactions." Cleverly named, this is actually a national sales tax, the most regressive kind of tax. Walker would use it to reduce the deficit and gradually replace the current income tax. That's his idea of reform.

Reagan and conservatives in Congress have other tax reform ideas. What they all have in common is that, having cut taxes on capital, they now want to make up the difference by raising taxes on labor. If the leader of the Democratic Party makes it politically impossible to take on any of the major boondoggles in the present system, the ways other politicians will find to raise the necessary revenues will be a lot worse.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
MAY 28, 1984

CASH GUZZLERS

William Brock, President Reagan's special trade representative, is annoyed. Automakers, he says in shocked tones, have given themselves immense bonuses as a reward for soaring auto profits. Ambassador Brock thinks it's time to give Detroit a taste of the free market by repealing the Japanese import quota. One is tempted to agree that this would serve the auto executives right, but that conclusion is too facile. Mr. Brock's indignation is appropriate. His remedy, however, is not.

The implication of Mr. Brock's indignation is that the automakers had agreed to some sort of social contract—specifically, one in which Washington restrains Japanese imports for a time, the United Auto Workers union restrains wages, and Detroit plows its earnings into modernization of the domestic auto industry. Such a contract might have made sense. But the Reagan Administration doesn't believe in social contracts or industrial bargains. It reveres the free market; and if an auto company vice president gets a million-dollar bonus, that must be the way the market, in its wisdom, wants it to be. Under the market system, managers get to charge whatever the traffic will bear—never mind that Administration policy has detoured some of the traffic from Japan.

So it's a little disingenuous when Mr. Brock berates Detroit for violating a bargain that the Administration couldn't bring itself to negotiate. The hypocrisy recalls the two cross-eyed drunks who bumped into each other on a sidewalk. "Why don't you look where you're going?" demanded one. "Why don't you go where you're looking?" replied the other. The Reagan White House looks to free markets, but it stumbles into one protectionist lamppost after another. Although the Administration abhors explicit planning, realities nonetheless compel all kinds of ad hoc schemes for autos, steel, farm products—even protection of Harley-Davidson motorcycles, the kind the Hell's Angels used to ride before they discovered Hondas. Because this backward form of planning is without ideological approbation, it is also without strategic coherence. Mr. Brock's dilemma is exquisite. Since the Administration can't very well acknowledge that it is committing a form of planning, it can't very well divide criteria for who gets protected, or how long, and on what terms.

What is Mr. Brock really up to? His comment was not a petulant aside in an unguarded moment, but a calculated, on-the-record comment to Washington's senior financial reporter, Hobart Rowen of *The Washington Post*. Is he serious about scrapping import quotas? Has he decided, à la John Kennedy, that businessmen are all s.o.b.s? Is he recklessly writing off the auto industry (and embarrassing the President) for the sake of ideological consistency? Not quite. As it happens, the biggest automaker, General Motors, would be just as happy to scrap the quota. As a GM executive explained to TNR's Bob Kuttner, General Motors has broken ranks with the other automakers, and is no longer lobbying for limits on Japanese imports.

Why? Well, when the quota was extended for a fourth year, into 1984, GM attempted to get the Japanese ceiling liberalized beyond the current level of 1.85 million cars, so that it could import more autos made in Japan with a GM label. GM now owns 34 percent of Isuzu and about 5 percent of Suzuki. Exporting American capital to Japan, the world's champion saver, is a bit like shipping oil to Kuwait. Nevertheless, GM happily contributed $200 million toward a new engine plant for Isuzu with a capacity of about 350,000 cars.

However, when Japan's Ministry of International Trade and Industry parceled out the 1984 quota among Japanese automakers, most of it went, as usual, to Toyota, Nissan, and Honda, Japan's Big Three. Upstart GM-Isuzu only got some 30,000 additional slots. GM's position now is that if it can't get a more generous quota for Isuzu, the quota system should be scrapped entirely. GM's more "liberal"

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approach to trade reflects something more devious than just a fervid devotion to David Ricardo. Removing all the barriers would mainly harm GM's domestic competition. While GM was making its deal with the Japanese, and phasing out domestic small-car production, Ford and Chrysler were behaving as if a social contract existed: they were investing heavily to develop small, state-of-the-art cars in the United States. GM, on the other hand, was not nearly as worthy a corporate citizen. GM's only domestic small cars will be jointly produced with Toyota. They will be assembled in Fremont, California, with parts made mostly in Japan. (See "Collusion Course," by Robert B. Reich, TNR, February 27.) Moreover, GM is getting its own small cars from Japan; its marketing strategy heavily emphasizes big cars, where there is little competition from Japan, quota or not.

FOR THE MORE Machiavellian of GM's strategists, the scenario for the late 1980s unfolds this way: The Japanese quota is removed in 1985, just in time to clobber small cars built in the U.S.A. by Chrysler and Ford, and to let in more GM small cars built in Japan. Japanese exports increase by a million cars. Ford and Chrysler totter. A public outcry follows, and a quota is restored—just in time to protect GM from Japan's growing capacity in large cars.

Thus there is a certain briar-patch effect to Mr. Brock's indignation. And there is a very convenient signal to the U.A.W. as well. Auto workers have just experienced three years of belt tightening, and hope to share some of Detroit's record profits in contract negotiations this fall. If talk is in the air about repealing the import quota, that not only threatens the U.A.W. with more competition from Nissan and Toyota; it also threatens more competition from "GM" cars made in Japan. In either case, it turns up the pressure for more wage concessions.

What is the cure for Detroit's high-handedness? Most editorialists share not only Mr. Brock's well-placed indignation, but also his misplaced remedy. "Mr. Brock and the rest of us have indeed been 'had'," says *The New York Times*. "Whether or not bonuses are justifiable, quotas on Japanese cars are not." But as we have seen, a simple repeal of quotas hardly punishes the auto executives. It would just accelerate the demise of domestic auto manufacture and encourage Detroit to relocate more production offshore.

Realistically, the United States government has three policy alternatives. It can pretend that the rest of the world shares a faith in Adam Smith that not even the Reagan Administration practices, and simply let the American auto industry, along with a lot of other American industries, continue its long, slow slide down the tubes. Lost in the blizzard of editorial outcry at the auto quota was the latest trade statistic. America's imbalance in merchandised trade widened in the first quarter of 1984 to a record $25.8 billion.

A second choice, equally improbable, is to wheel out the big diplomatic guns and demand that Japan recast its successful economic development strategy in the American image. If laissez-faire is good enough for the United States, how dare Japan engage in strategic planning? How dare the Japanese protect their own developing skills and high technology? "Reciprocity" is the code word for getting tough with Japan. But if Japan is shrewd enough to invent successful economic planning, and to use its big domestic market as a laboratory for innovation, who are we to inflict Adam Smith on the Japanese? We have more important uses for our dwindling diplomatic influence in Tokyo.

The third choice is a pragmatic middle way likely to satisfy neither dogmatic free traders nor retaliationists. We should negotiate more reciprocity with the Japanese, to be sure, but at the same time the Administration needs to negotiate some reciprocity with our own auto industry. That bargain will include both restraint by the auto workers and reinvestment by the industry. Any dose of protectionism to sweeten the deal is justifiable only if the public gets something in return. The one agency that can broker that deal is the government.

AS PRACTICAL students of industry from Alfred Chandler to John Kenneth Galbraith to our own Robert B. Reich keep trying to explain, government is intimately implicated in modern capitalism, like it or not. That doesn't mean government should enforce economic stasis. Government, if it takes its head out of the sand, can help broker economic progress. Once, perhaps, it was plausible to believe that what was good for General Motors was unambiguously good for America. Today, GM can just as easily decamp and set up shop in Osaka. Shouldn't that be a concern for public policy?

Japanese planners are astute enough to recognize that good jobs for Japanese workers are part of what drives Japanese miracles. They strive to keep high-wage jobs in Japan, not just to reward peripatetic capital that doesn't care where jobs are located. That is a true social contract. Our own Administration is too quick to assume that the only truly dangerous aliens are American auto workers.

It is also more than a little ironic that Mr. Reagan's first (and, one hopes wanly, perhaps last) Administration began with supply-side incentives, and ends with a broadside against auto executives for using the shelter of import quotas to reap outrageous bonuses. The supply side, we may recall, was based on the idea that bigger incentives would improve productivity. By this logic, why limit million-dollar bonuses to the executive suite? Why not spread these incentives—and the productivity that presumably follows (or is it precedes?) them—to the shop floor? GM chairman Roger B. Smith's huge raise has little to do with his productivity. Mainly, GM's profits rose on auto worker austerity, import quotas, and the latest turn in the business cycle. Mr. Smith might as well claim a bonus because the sun rose in the morning. Detroit's arrogance ought to force a national debate, but the debate is properly about the quids and quos of industrial planning, not about the final sacrifice of domestic auto production to a bigger dose of laissez-faire.

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RUNNING FROM THE PACS

They don't ban books in Boston or censor movies in Washington anymore, but Puritanism is alive and spreading in both places. Its target now is not sex but PACs. The righteous—led by the *Globe* in Boston and by Common Cause in Washington and elsewhere—are campaigning to cleanse the electoral process of political action committees. They have succeeded in forcing Democratic candidates for the Presidency and for the Senate in Massachusetts to renounce PAC contributions, and pressure is on candidates in other places to do likewise.

But the Puritans' victories are both temporary and harmful. Ultimately, attempts to extirpate the influence of money from politics must fail just as surely as attempts to keep sex out of literature and films, and for the same reason: both efforts infringe upon constitutionally protected rights of free expression. In the meantime, the competition among Democrats to demonstrate purity tends to overshadow other issues. The generalized attack on PACs obscures the differences between committees advocating worthy public causes and those promoting narrow special interests. And while the Democrats spend their time savaging each other for not renouncing PAC money early or often enough, the Republicans for the most part smile, sit back, and rake it in.

The goings-on in Massachusetts illustrate the power of latter-day Puritans to compel candidates to conform. The major Democratic candidates to succeed Senator Paul Tsongas score about equally on the major ideological litmus tests in America's most liberal state. They are all for a nuclear freeze, against acid rain, and for negotiations in El Salvador. The one real difference between them was that Representative James V. Shannon had accepted $38,150 in PAC contributions—15 percent of his total so far—while the other candidates had declared they would forgo PAC money. That difference became the focus of the campaign, with *The Boston Globe* last month demanding that Mr. Shannon—and also Republican candidate Elliot Richardson—demonstrate purity by doing the same. A *Globe* cartoon implied that Mr. Shannon had sold his soul to special interests for $38,000. Mr. Shannon buckled and agreed to accept no further PAC funds. Mr. Richardson, who at that time insisted he would accept PAC money on "a case-by-case basis," turned around a week later and said he planned to return $3,000 he had received from PACs and would take no more.

The case of the national Democrats illustrates another aspect of Puritanism. Inevitably it results in hypocrisy. Gary Hart and Walter Mondale had never been enemies of PACs before this year. Senator Hart accepted PAC contributions in his Colorado campaigns. Mr. Mondale even created a PAC of his own to pay his pre-campaign political expenses and to assist 1982 Democratic Congressional candidates. But Common Cause—with that most proper Bostonian, Archibald Cox, as its chairman—has succeeded in making PACs naughty. The result is that both Mr. Mondale and Mr. Hart have renounced PAC donations, except that Mr. Mondale is only too happy to accept other valuable help from labor unions and Mr. Hart would have done the same had he been able to get it.

In view of his solemn pledge not to accept PAC money for his campaign organization, Mr. Mondale was asking for political trouble in allowing committees of his delegates in various states to accept it. Mr. Hart was fully justified in attacking Mr. Mondale for hypocrisy, and Mr. Mondale was well advised to limit the damage by closing down the committees and giving back the money when he got caught. But the better course would have been for both candidates not to strike poses from the outset and to tell the truth to the public about campaign finance.

The truth is that PACs arose out of an earlier attempt to purify politics—the 1974 federal election law provision that limited individual contributions to $1,000 per candidate. Conceivably Congress could limit PAC contributions to less than the $5,000 per-PAC-per-candidate now permitted, but that would almost certainly result in an explosion of "independent expenditures" by PACs on behalf of candidates they favor and against candidates they do not. The U.S. Supreme Court has said—correctly—that people cannot be forbidden to spend their money on behalf of causes and candidates they believe in. Communication on behalf of candidates and causes costs money. Inevitably, money will get where it's needed. The signal virtue of the 1974 election law was that it required full disclosure of who is giving how much to whom. That law actually furnishes Puritans with an opportunity for socially useful activity. Instead of trying to ban PACs entirely, they should concentrate on looking through the campaign finance and Congressional voting records to see who is in bed with whom.

NOTEBOOK

□ TWO YEARS AGO in these pages, Firuz Kazemzadeh described the brutal persecution of the Bahais in the Iran of the Ayatollah Khomeini. ("Attack On The Bahais," June 16, 1982.) At that time, 111 Bahais had been killed. A few weeks ago Mr. Kazemzadeh and other American Bahai leaders testified at a House subcommittee hearing that the dead now number more than 170, including 17 who were hanged last summer. Here is how the presiding judge of the Revolutionary Court explained the death sentences: "It is absolutely certain that in the Islamic Republic of Iran there is no place for Bahais or Bahaism. . . . Before it is too late, the Bahais should recant Bahaism, which is condemned by reason and logic." The logic: Bahais believe in the prophet Baha'u'llah, who—preaching social equality, pacifism, and world unity—broke off from Islam in 1846. Shiites take Mohammed (700 A.D.) as the last true

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prophet. In this fanatical Islamic state, false prophecy means death. At least 700 Bahais languish in jails awaiting trial by revolutionary court or serving sentences for "crimes against God," "corruption on earth," or "Zionism." With Iran already isolated diplomatically, there is little that can be done through normal political channels. A joint resolution in Congress condemning Iran for the persecution of Bahais will likely fall on deaf ears. But that is all we are left with. It is the same faint hope Mr. Kazemzadeh expressed: that through international expressions of outrage, the Ayatollah's regime might "restrain its fury."

□ TWENTY YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "To put it plainly, James Bond—despite his lean good looks, his taste in food, wine, and women, his high standing in the British Secret Service, his license to kill—is stupid. He disobeys orders and blunders into situations he should have anticipated in advance. He is almost always known to the enemy as soon as he arrives, undercover, on the scene of action. He usually flounders around long enough for his adversaries to disrupt his elaborate plans and capture him. His only genius lies in an infinite capacity for taking pain. He has suffered (and survived) bombing, shooting, stabbing, poisoning, and automobile attack. He has managed to (barely) escape castration by carpet-beater; bisection by buzzsaw; rocket blast; shark, barracuda, and octopus attack; a near-fatal increase in height on a health farm stretching apparatus; and a dose of poison from the sex glands of a rare Eastern fish. Such bizarre punishment is oddly requited: Bond has enjoyed the charms of the expensive Tiffany Case; the Bahamian nature girl, Honeychile Rider; the mystic Solitaire; and the ineffable Pussy Galore." ("James Bond: Culture Hero," by George Grella, May 30, 1964.)

The analogy heard 'round the world.

TWO REVOLUTIONS

"I AM NOT SAYING that the Sandinistas are perfect any more than I am saying that the young United States of America was perfect after the Revolutionary War," Bishop Paul Moore Jr. declared in his annual Easter message to the Episcopal Diocese of New York. "It took us twelve years to have an election, and George Washington was the only candidate." Jesse Jackson has offered the same analysis—and so have the Sandinistas themselves. The comparison, however, fails both as history and as analogy. Whatever the merits or faults of the Sandinistas as revolutionary leaders, the authoritarian character of Nicaragua today bears little resemblance to the democratic character of the United States after its revolution in 1776.

Although the United States had many imperfections in its first twelve years—that's why the Constitution was written—a lack of elections was not among them. Even before the states adopted the Articles of Confederation in 1783, their first national system of governance, eleven states wrote their own constitutions. All of them, with the exception of South Carolina, provided for the yearly election of representatives to the lower houses of their legislatures. Most also required the yearly election of their chief executive. Frequent elections kept the people involved in their government, made legislators more responsive to the people's wishes, and rooted out corruption wherever it occurred. "Where annual elections end, there slavery begins," John Adams wrote in his influential essay, "Thoughts on Government," in 1776.

To keep the branches of government separate, independent, and impartial, many of the state constitutions prohibited any individual from holding more than one elective or appointive position within the government. To prevent any individual from becoming too powerful or too entrenched, the constitutions required frequent rotation in office. Seven of the ten state constitutions drafted in 1776-77, for example, limited the number of years that a governor could successively hold office. The Articles prohibited delegates to the U.S. Congress from holding their seats for more than three years in six.

With more elections came increased electioneering. Candidates running for office in the colonial era rarely had to do much campaigning. Only the "better sort" ran for office, and they depended on the people's deference to elect them. Active electioneering was shunned as an unpleasant, if not illegitimate tactic. By the 1780s, however, candidates began to realize that a highly politicized population would not automatically give its votes to the best man. Office-seekers began actively to solicit people's support. When running for a seat in the first Congress, James Madison complained about his "extreme distaste to steps having an electioneering appearance." Nevertheless, caught in a tight race against his opponent, James Monroe, who had no such scruples, Madison made personal appearances in his district and actively sought the electorate's support. (He won by 300 votes.)

Newspapers also assumed a more prominent role in the political process after the Revolution. Between 1775 and 1789 the number of newspapers in the country doubled—from forty-five to ninety. Newspapers not only reported on a variety of state and national contests but also took frankly partisan positions, openly advocating one person or party over another.

Americans thus had a great deal of electoral experience by the time they came to elect their first President. And though they elected a general, George Washington always recognized the political basis of military power. Even when Congress failed to provide him with the most basic tools necessary to win the war—enough money, supplies, and troops—Washington never doubted that the military was subordinate to civilian authority. As Commander-in-

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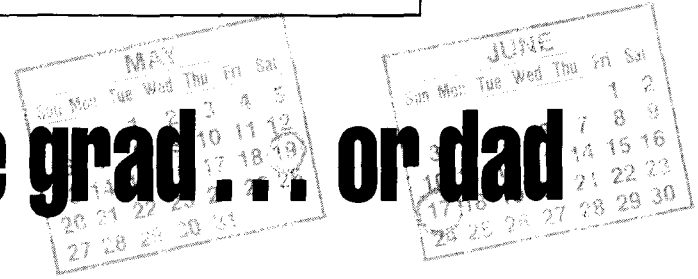

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Chief of the Continental Army, he could have bypassed the Continental Congress but never did. Faced with a conspiracy against the government fomented by his soldiers in 1783, Washington quelled their rebelliousness. He rejected out of hand suggestions that he could run the country better than the Congress did.

After the war was over, Washington retired to private life rather than attempt to exploit his fame and power. He was portrayed as the American Cincinnatus—like the Roman soldier, he had thrown down his plow to go to war. But he was also seen as being equally prepared to return to his simple life on the farm. In 1787 only his increasing concern for the country's fate and numerous requests for his participation led him to attend the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. Once there, he gave the proceedings added stability and legitimacy. Many delegates at the Convention wrote the provisions regarding the Presidency with the assumption that he would be the first person to occupy the position.

It is true, as Bishop Moore stated, that Washington was unopposed for the Presidency in 1789. But he was also elected—and, for all purposes, elected unanimously. (Moreover, there was a vigorous competition for Vice President with ten men receiving electoral votes.) Washington did not achieve office by manipulation, coercion, or military might; he was simply recognized by all as the embodiment of what a President should be. As a Baltimore writer commented soon after Washington's election:

> Perhaps [election] day has exhibited what has never happened before in any part of the globe; above three millions of people, scattered over a country of vast extent, of opposite habits and different manners, all fixing their hopes and wishes on the same man, and unanimously voting for him only, without the intervention of force, artiface, plan, or concert. With what delight will the lover of mankind dwell on this period of history, and cherish the memory of a people who could thus feel and thus reward a life of great and virtuous actions!

Nicaragua, of course, has often known "the intervention of force" at the hands of the United States and continues to face it today in the form of C.I.A.-funded *contras*. But even in the two years before the *contras* appeared, there was little evidence that the Sandinistas would tolerate the kind of democratic pluralism that flourished in early America—and there has been even less since. Even if one believes, as Bishop Moore does, that U.S. policy in Central America is "illegal and immoral," it is absurd to compare the politics of the Sandinistas with the Americans of the early Republic. It is ironic that Bishop Moore would denigrate his country's history in order to distort Nicaragua's.

ROSEMARIE ZAGARRI

Rosemarie Zagarri will teach early American history at West Virginia University next fall.

On democratic theory and Democratic primaries.

RUNOFF RUN-IN

BY CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

JESSE JACKSON has made an issue of the double primary. This is the system by which a second election pits the two top vote-getters against each other in cases where the original primary produces no candidate with more than half of the vote. The double primary guarantees that the winner will enjoy an absolute majority. It also guarantees, claims Jackson, that in the South black candidates don't get elected: even if a black wins a plurality in the first round, the second round permits white voters to bury their differences and rally around a white candidate. It is thus another scheme to disenfranchise blacks—mathematical gerrymandering added to the geographic variety.

Bert Lance, chairman of the Georgia Democratic Party, represents the southern Democratic establishment in resisting Jackson. His fear is that abolishing the double primary will deliver seats to the Republicans. Indeed, Republicans seem only slightly less enthusiastic about Jackson's proposal than Jackson. Their calculation is obvious. Under a single primary system the Democratic Party may find itself running weak minority candidates (in the electoral as well as the racial sense) against Republicans in the general election. Whites denied the opportunity to gang up on a black candidate in a runoff might do so in the general election, and turn many southern seats over to the Republican Party.

Jackson might not be too unhappy with that prospect. Single primaries would still produce Democratic nominees among those black candidates who today can get a plurality, but not a majority, of the Democratic vote. If they win

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the general election, Jackson acquires Congressmen who owe him something. If they lose, he still manages to destroy the power of the white Democratic establishment in the South, and to promote candidates he favors as powers in the party.

Walter Mondale, characteristically, takes a middle position. In those constituencies where the double primary can be shown to be clearly discriminatory against blacks, he is willing to reexamine it. Elsewhere, he is for keeping it. This may be another case of Mondale daring to be cautious. It is also a case of Mondale being right. He is right because in general, runoff systems are more democratic, and thus worth preserving. On the other hand, they can be (though, even in the South, not necessarily are) used to deny consistently the wishes of a fixed minority (e.g., blacks). Where such an effect can be demonstrated, the current double primary system must yield to an alternative system, perhaps less democratic, but one which promotes other political values (like equity and nondiscrimination) of equal or, arguably, greater importance.

WHAT IS GOOD about runoffs? They promote democratic values in three ways. First, they are more representative than single-round systems. By representative I mean producing results that better reflect the will of the electorate, or, more accurately, that reflect the will of more of the electorate. The runoff does this quite simply by honoring the second choice of those who support also-ran candidates. In single-round systems, if you support a loser (third or lower), you are never heard from again. The runoff says to French Communists: you can't have Marchais; it's either Mitterrand or Giscard; choose, and your choice will count. Another way of stating this is to say that when a candidate wins by a plurality (of less than 50 percent), a majority of the electorate has not chosen its representative; with a runoff, the majority always has. Not that the runoff is the *most* democratic system. There are more elaborate ranking schemes. Some are point systems: baseball writers elect the most valuable player by ranking the top candidates and assigning each rank a certain number of points—10 for first place, 9 for second, 8 for third, etc. Others use multiple elimination rounds: party leadership conferences in Canada drop the lowest ranking candidate after each ballot, eliciting the second, third, up to (n-1)th choice of supporters of losing candidates. These elegant contrivances are more representative than the simple runoff, which arbitrarily picks the top two candidates and eliminates the rest from contention. They are also hopelessly impractical for elections that cannot be conducted in an auditorium or by mail.

Second, in any system based on majority rule, the runoff confers a sense of legitimacy to the ultimate winner that he could not otherwise acquire. E. B. White is right that "democracy is the recurrent suspicion that more than half of the people are right more than half of the time." Nevertheless, since that suspicion is all that divides us from rule by caudillos or comandantes, it is an enduring one. Moreover, it is a suspicion only fully engaged when more than half of the people pull the lever, and thus take responsibility, for the candidate who must ultimately speak for the community. There may be no "general will," but a majority's will is a closer approximation than a plurality's, and thus more able to confer a mandate, a sense of the right of the chosen representative to act.

Charles de Gaulle, not particularly known for his devotion to democracy, understood the principle well. In the Fifth Republic he set out to create a strong presidency, and one of the ways he did so was to ensure that the president would always be acting in the name of the majority (e.g., *la France*). In multiparty systems, like the French, runoffs are a necessity. They prevent the presidency from going to the fluke winner of a split vote. They are equally useful *within* parties with free-for-all multicandidate (primary) races, like those in the United States, where anyone can run, and sometimes so many do that the winner in a single-round system can emerge with a quarter of the vote or less.

That is why Mondale was being only slightly mischievous when he invited Jackson to institute his single-round system at this year's Democratic National Convention. He was forcing Jackson to challenge the wisdom of the party process, which does not allow a nominee to emerge with less than a majority. This is done not out of devotion to abstract principle, but out of an appreciation of the fact that a nomination without a majority is not worth very much.

Third, a runoff system encourages certain healthy democratic practices, like inclusiveness, compromise, and conciliation. It rewards coalitions. In a single round, a hard core of single-minded supporters is often enough to win. In a runoff, a hard core is a start but is not enough. The runoff system ensures not only that coherent minorities will not be tyrannous, but also that, unless they can broaden their support, they will be powerless. The winner is the one who can make himself the second choice of those who are not his natural constituency.

BUT WHAT IF those outside his natural constituency will never support him because of race? What if racism defeats this benefit of the runoff system? Or to put it another way: granted that the runoff system promotes democratic values like legitimacy and compromise; it is also more representative; but if the electorate is profoundly racist, the more representative the system, the more it will produce a result honoring the racist wishes of the electorate. Is it then proper to choose a less democratic system to avoid a result that we don't like?

We do it all the time. Modern Western democracies deviate radically from "pure" forms of democracy precisely to avoid outcomes that are deemed undesirable.

We compromise first in choosing representative, as opposed to direct, democracy. The usual argument for accepting that impurity was that in any political system larger than the Greek city-state, direct democracy (the electorate deciding every issue) is impractical. Modern

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technology has disposed of that convenient excuse. Two-way cable television now makes direct democracy possible. Who's for it? Who is for polling Americans nightly as to whether they want to continue aid to Nicaraguan *contras* for another day? Direct democracy is no longer impractical. It is simply absurd.

We tolerate a second level of democratic impurity by granting independence to our elected representatives. There was a lively argument beginning in the eighteenth century as to whether an elected official should be a delegate (a mirror of the views of his constituency) or a representative (a free agent entitled to act in accordance with his own judgment). That issue has long been decided in favor of the less populist form, because it alone can produce government with memory, conscience, and coherence.

A third compromise that most, though not all, Western democracies have adopted is the winner-take-all constituency system. Inevitably (and even in runoff systems) it shuts out the wishes of a minority in each constituency. Accordingly, some democracies, such as Israel and (in a partial way) Germany, have adopted the purer form of proportional representation, so that minorities are alloted political power in strict accordance with their popular support. But the costs are great. Proportional representation tends to fractionate the political system, multiply the parties, and create instability. Constituency systems, which ruthlessly disregard the wishes of each constituency's minority, produce artificially large parliamentary majorities for the winners (a loud and just complaint of Britain's grossly under-represented Liberal-Social Democratic Alliance), and therefore tend to produce stable and effective governments.

And in strongly constitutional systems, like that of the United States, there is a fourth level of compromise with pure democracy. Some electoral outcomes are simply thrown out because they contradict political values more important than democracy itself. That is what happens every time the Supreme Court declares a law or referendum result unconstitutional. There are certain choices that the majority is simply not permitted to make, and if it does it has no standing. There are exceptions to our superstition about the wisdom of "more than half of the people," and crossing constitutional barriers is one of them. Is racist voting another? Do we throw out ignoble, though not unconstitutional, choices?

THERE IS SOME evidence that runoff primaries were originally instituted in the South at least partially to prevent potential black candidates from slipping through to nomination on account of divisions in the white vote. Yet the long-ago nefarious origin of a given political arrangement does not necessarily rule it out of consideration in the present. (For example, the system of two Senators per state was designed partly to protect the interests of the thinly populated slave states.) But where it can be shown that the double primary system serves systematically to prevent black candidates from winning—where, for example, blacks consistently win round one and never round two—it is proper to consider values other than pure majoritarianism. The best way to enfranchise a permanently disenfranchised minority would be to abolish the constituency system itself and go to a proportional system (e.g., Congressional seats allocated on a statewide basis in a list system). But such radical reforms are alien to the American political process. Single-round primaries are not. In fact, outside the South, they are the rule.

CLEARLY THE perfect democratic system would be one of consensus, where every choice is made by 100 percent of the population. Since that is impossible, we choose, for all the reasons mentioned above, 50 percent plus one as the legitimating majority. But not for all issues: in particularly important constitutional ones, two-thirds or three-quarters majorities are demanded. Why not modify the runoff system (in the opposite direction), so that it is triggered only if the leading candidate gets less than 40 percent, rather than 50 percent, of the vote? (This is the rule in New York City mayoral elections.) This adjustment would preserve most of the advantages of the runoff, while correcting a glaring unfairness found in the South. Normally, the double primary is more fair because it honors more choices. But only if those whose choices are honored are randomly allocated, i.e., one has an equal chance to be in the majority or minority. Where the second primary serves to shut out the black candidate, the first choice of a *fixed* minority is permanently disregarded—and that minority is defined by race. In those districts where blacks do well in the first round, but always lose in the second, a 40 percent threshold would mitigate this unfairness.

In 1964 we decided that individual choices (whom one permits to sit at one's lunch counter, to whom one will sell a house, etc.) may be curtailed if they are racially discriminatory and thus produce injury to other citizens and to important social values, like equity. We are more hesitant to curtail the collective choices of people as expressed in the voting booth. But what is being asked is curtailing, not denying those choices: not the abolition of free elections and the appointment of black candidates, but the imposition of a more difficult threshold for runoffs to give blacks a better chance of being elected in a racist environment. Admittedly, a 40 percent threshold for a runoff will result in more people being shut out from ultimately choosing the representative. But it will also decrease the chance that the shut-out minority will permanently and consistently be the same—and black.

Bert Lance thinks that it won't work anyway, because white racists will have their second chance to defeat a black in the general election. That may be true. (Though not always: in Chicago, Harold Washington won the Democratic nomination with a bare plurality, and, despite racial overtones in the general election, beat his Republican opponent, too.) But even if that were true, the prospect of losing by doing the right thing has not often daunted the Democratic Party in the past. A modified runoff system is an honorable means of continuing that tradition. □

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The fault is in the speakers, and in the hearers, too.

THE DECLINE OF ORATORY

BY HENRY FAIRLIE

Be a craftsman in speech, for the tongue is a sword to a man, and speech is more valorous than fighting. —AKHTOY III

ONE DOES not usually think of the ancient Egyptians as orators. So I was surprised when I first came across this sensible advice of King Akhtoy to his son, King Merikare, and I at once began to revise my opinion of their political arts. Yet on reflection I realized that my surprise was unwarranted. The Egyptians' not very distant neighbors, the ancient Hebrews, were always making speeches from mountaintops; and although the Old Testament gives the best speeches to Joseph, and later to Moses, we have to assume that the Egyptians were no slouches in replying. The fact is that until our own time it was impossible to think of the practice of politics without the eloquence with which kings and politicians tried to move individuals and multitudes. Only today, and especially in America, does oratory have no place in politics.

If you wished to summon a nation to defend itself, how would you address it? As the Armada approached the English shores, Queen Elizabeth resolved to visit her army at Tilbury. On August 8, 1588, according to a contemporary, "full of princely resolution . . . she passed like some Amazonian princess" among her soldiers, and on the following day, mounted on a stately horse, with a truncheon in her hands, she addressed them:

> My loving people, we have been persuaded by some that are careful of our safety, to take heed how we commit ourselves to armed multitudes, for fear of treachery. But I assure you, I do not desire to live to distrust my faithful and loving people. Let tyrants fear. I have always so behaved myself that, under God, I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and good will of my subjects; and therefore I am come among you, as you see, at this time, not for my recreation and disport, but being resolved, in the midst and heat of battle, to live or die amongst you all, to lay down for my God, and for my kingdom, and for my people, my honor and my blood, even in the dust. I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too, and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain, or any prince of Europe, should dare to invade the borders of my realm; to which, rather than any dishonor shall grow by me, I myself will take up arms, I myself will be your general, judge, and rewarder of every one of your virtues in the field.

This is not a speech put into her mouth by Shakespeare, like those of Henry V before Harfleur and Agincourt. Although monarchy was then a very elevated institution, this is manifestly a speech by a woman who knew her people. "Nothing could surpass the felicity of the speech that she made," says her best biographer, J. E. Neale, and we have to ask when any of us last heard a speech we called felicitous.

These reflections were stirred by a friend who recently read a copy of the 1858 Lincoln-Douglas debates, in which two candidates for the Senate began to thrash out the issues raised by slavery and the expansion of the nation to the West. My friend had also been listening to this year's campaign debates, and his reaction was predictable. Could any such extended debates as those of 1858 take place today, and if they did, how would they be reported? Our politics is starved not only of eloquence but of argument as well. Why? If anyone doubts that oratory has all but been silenced in politics, he need read only the annual volumes of *Public Papers of the Presidents*: six for Richard Nixon, a stout two for Gerald Ford, and a whopping nine (all of them very fat) for Jimmy Carter. One's blood will not be stirred, one's mind will not be pricked or elevated, by a single speech in any of them.

Some things about the Lincoln-Douglas debates seem quite familiar. Just as today various sponsors draw up elaborate rules for the campaign debates, so a strict formula was laid down in 1858. Abraham Lincoln challenged Stephen A. Douglas to joint debates, and Douglas agreed to appear with him in six of Illinois' eight Congressional districts. (Both candidates had spoken already in the other two.) Douglas was to open the first debate—in Ottawa on August 21—with a speech of an hour's duration; Lincoln was to have an hour and a half for his reply; and Douglas was to close with a speech of thirty minutes. In the following debates, they were to take turns in opening the discussion, the same rules being followed. Thus a "fairness doctrine" was applied even then.

The most obvious difference between then and now was the length of the speeches. But first consider the audiences. They were popular audiences. In Ottawa, according to Horace White in *The Chicago Tribune*, "the crowd was enormous. . . . Crowds were pouring into town from sunrise till noon in all sorts of conveyances, teams, railroad trains, canal boats, cavalcades, and processions on foot, with banners and inscriptions. The town was cov-

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ered with bunting, and bands of music were tooting round every corner." The debate was held in the town square. The second debate, in Freeport, was held in a grove on the outskirts of town. There the candidates addressed a crowd of fifteen thousand people. So it continued with crowds of much the same size to the last debate at Quincy. Today any candidate who could draw a crowd of fifteen thousand in a small town for a debate of three long speeches in three hours would be hailed as a miracle worker.

THEN THERE was the wider audience to be reached by reporting. The headlines in the local papers suggest that neither television news today nor even *The New York Post* have much for which to apologize. *The Chicago Times*, Douglas's organ, proclaimed:

> DOUGLAS AND LINCOLN.—15,000 PRESENT!—LINCOLN ON PLEDGES.—LINCOLN 'AIN'T PLEDGED' TO ANYTHING! LINCOLN ASKS QUESTIONS! LINCOLN GETS ANSWERED! A LEAK TAKES PLACE.—THE 'LION' FRIGHTENED THE 'DOG'! LINCOLN GETS WEAK! LINCOLN A FOUNTAIN!!—SPEECHES OF THE CANDIDATES.

The Chicago Tribune, Lincoln's organ, put it differently:

> FIFTEEN THOUSAND PERSONS PRESENT. —THE DRED SCOTT CHAMPION 'TROTTED OUT' AND 'BROUGHT TO HIS MILK.' —IT PROVES TO BE STUMP-TAILED. —GREAT CAVING-IN ON THE OTTAWA FORGERY. —HE WAS 'CONSCIENTIOUS' ABOUT IT. —WHY CHASE'S AMENDMENT WAS VOTED DOWN. —LINCOLN TUMBLES HIM ALL OVER STEPHENSON COUNTY. —VERBATIM REPORT OF LINCOLN'S SPEECH. —DOUGLAS' REPLY AND LINCOLN'S REJOINDER.

In both papers, partisanship and sensation. Yet both reported the long speeches in full, which helped to create a wider audience. Copies of the debates were hurriedly printed and carried across the nation. They were passed from hand to hand, and we know that they were read. One of the immediate results of the debates was that they "so advertised Lincoln that he became a figure of national importance," as the historian James G. Randall wrote. Indeed, "without them his becoming the Republican Presidential candidate in 1860 would have been far less likely." From a single Senate election, without the aid of radio or television, a national politician was born. The remarkable thing is that this happened even though he lost the election.

The general verdict of history agrees with Albert J. Beveridge that on their merits the debates "deserve little notice." George Fort Milton compared them unfavorably with those between Daniel Webster and John C. Calhoun. In an extensive analysis of the debates, Randall showed how slight their substance was, how each candidate temporized, how both were guilty of introducing red herrings, and how little they really disagreed on most points. Lincoln's famous second question—"Can the people of the United States Territory, in any lawful way, against the wish of any citizen of the United States, exclude slavery from its limits prior to the formation of a State Constitution?"—must seem to us extraordinarily limited.

Yet people in their own time must be allowed to debate their concerns in the terms that seem relevant to them. After all, the Lincoln-Douglas debates followed the Supreme Court decision in the Dred Scott case in 1857, in which the southern Justices, who comprised a majority, declared that Congress could not prohibit slavery in any state or territory, and that the Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional. Not everything can be attributed to the fact that the debates were, in Randall's words, "a spectacle, a drama, an exhibition, almost a sporting event." Nevertheless, the reminder of the degree to which they were spectacle warns us not to be too facile in lamenting the decline of oratory. What exactly is it that we are missing?

IN ANY speech or debate, there are two actors: the speakers and the audience. In the time of the Lincoln-Douglas debates, a wider audience could be reached only through a speech's effect on the immediate audience. If the speech fell flat for the immediate audience, it would not travel the nation. Webster and Calhoun spoke to the nation by speaking directly to their own very distinct constituencies. Webster's great public speeches, such as the 1820 abolitionist address at Plymouth, needed their Massachusetts audiences. The oratory of Calhoun, an intellectual giant in the political life of his day (a fact often overlooked because his name is attached to the cause of slavery), took wing from the audiences of South Carolina, whose interests he articulated so boldly that Richard Hofstadter called him "the Marx of the Master Class."

Without an immediate audience, there can be no great oratory. The audience is as much an actor as the speaker. It charges the speaker with energy—there it is before him, and he must respond to it as well as it to him. In the days of the greatest oratory, there were not even loudspeakers. Yet a politician's voice could reach the back of a vast audience—and the audience could answer back on equal terms with its own voice. Heckling was an essential part of oratory. The last great heckle I heard was in 1966, when Prime Minister Harold Wilson went to speak in Chatham at a crucial by-election. The main business of Chatham is in its naval dockyards. Wilson elaborated his government's plan for expanding the Royal Navy, and then he did what no politician of his experience ought to have done. He asked a rhetorical question: "Why do I emphasize the importance of the Navy tonight?" From the middle of the hall a Cockney voice rang out: "Because you're in bloody Chatham, mate!"

But how can an audience heckle, how can it play its part, in the arenas where politicians speak now? There are the batteries of microphones, which themselves separate speaker from audience; there are the loudspeakers, which make the rapport between speaker and audience unequal; there are the banks of cameras, which sometimes physically block audience from speaker. And there are the squads of Secret Service men and other "security personnel." A really rough heckler now would probably be manhandled out of the hall and even detained for questioning.

The first reason for the decline of oratory, then, is that

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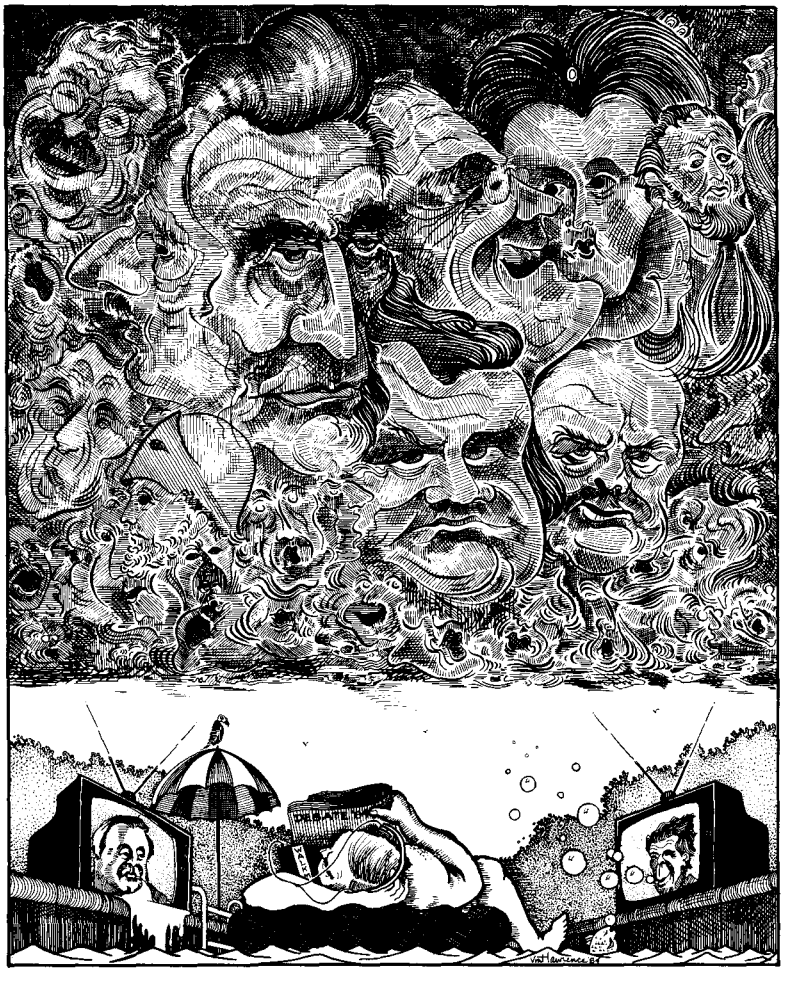
the audience for oratory has disappeared. The politician does not know whom he is addressing. This is obviously true in the televised debates and prepared televised talks. The speaker is addressing only the red eye of the camera. When it switches on, he turns on; when it switches off, he turns off. There can be no oratory from a teleprompter. The next time you see a speaker using one of these devices when addressing a large audience—President Reagan will use one to give his acceptance speech at the Republican convention this summer, for example—look carefully. The speaker will seem to be looking at his audience, to the left and to the right, while speaking as if from memory. In fact, he will be looking at a pair of one-way mirrors in which the words of his text are reflected up to him. The audience (and the camera) sees through the mirror to the speaker's face; the speaker sees only his script, unrolling electronically three or four feet in front of him. That is why the eyes of such a speaker always look strangely unfocused; as far as the audience is concerned, he is literally blinded by his own words.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

But it is no less true that even when the politician is out on the campaign trail, the occasions have been arranged by his "media advisers" for television news that night, and his "advance teams" have chosen the site for its pictorial value. When a politician speaks in a square in Pratt, Kansas, he receives nothing back from the people of Pratt. Candidates on the hustings now are not nourished by their audience.

Great oratory need not be only of an epic quality. One of the last examples of oratory in America occurred before I had even come to this country. But I have heard many accounts of it from journalists who were there. During the election campaign of 1960, John Kennedy sent Lyndon Johnson into the South. Johnson was to meet the South's angry criticisms of the Democratic Party's platform on civil rights; and he did make one epic speech, in New Orleans—his equivalent, in addressing southerners, to Kennedy's speech to the Baptists in Houston. But it was not of this that the journalists talked for years afterward. From small town to small town across the South, he went, on a whistle-stop tour on a train called "The Yellow Rose of Texas," facing the sullen crowds of rednecks—"mah people," as he later put it to me. And head-on he spoke to them, as Stewart Alsop once characterized it, "with the tongues of angels." How would you feel, he demanded of them, if your child was sick, and you could not take him to the hospital in this town, but had to go twenty miles away? How would you feel if you were shopping and your child was thirsty, and you could not give him a cold soda at the counter in the drugstore? And again and again, he won the sullen audiences. The inspiration was partly in his conviction, partly in his courage, but also partly in his interaction with the audiences he had to win. People used to sneer at him for "pressing the flesh." Yet I know of no great politician on either side of the Atlantic who has not longed to get out there and be renourished by the people.

The second reason for the decline of oratory is that there are almost no common allusions that a politician can make. Throughout the South, Johnson was able to draw on southerners' shared experience and language, and the audiences responded. As recently as a few decades ago, a politician could refer to Job or even to Balaam's ass and be confident that his audience would understand the reference. It made a great difference when even in semi-literate families everyone heard the Old Testament read every Sunday, and when in the homes of the humblest there were likely to be copies of the Bible and of Shakespeare. The constituents of the great English radical, John Bright, were cotton spinners and weavers in the mill town of Rochdale. When they asked why he had refused office, he answered with the story of the Shunammite woman who, when Elisha said, "Shall I do aught for thee with the king?" replied, "I dwell among my own people." Cotton workers who left school at the age of 8 did not need the allusion explained to them. Bright was one of the greatest of orators. Everett Dirksen was not, but his speeches too were full-blooded. One was

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never surprised when Dirksen reached to some Biblical or Shakespearean allusion. What is more, they came from his memory, not from a speechwriter. Congressional oratory today is thin gruel. And not surprisingly. Most of it comes from cloistered Congressional staffs, with even less reach of allusion than their masters.

Before about 1945, common allusions were to be found even in the oratory of industrialists and businessmen addressing the National Association of Manufacturers. They were of course to be found in the oratory of union leaders. But after the Second World War one can notice a sea change. A new geographical and social mobility which severed people from their roots, a richly varied and accessible popular culture, the flight to the suburbs, and all the influences that were creating much sharper differences between the generational cultures than before weakened the sources from which the allusions had been drawn. I once came across this quotation from the address of a businessman addressing the annual meeting of the Texas Gulf Historical Association in 1958: "We are inclined to travel in a Sputnik toward the outer space of the theories of Karl Marx or Lenin, and destined to crash in the area of inflation or deflation—who can tell which?" No robber baron of an earlier generation would have spoken like that. I scribbled it down because it was a wholly accurate reflection of what was happening to the public speech of the nation in the 1950s: the muddled metaphor had replaced the common allusion.

THE ORATOR has to be something of an actor. There was considerable acting by Lincoln, as every contemporary account makes clear, even in the debates with Stephen Douglas. There was certainly great acting in the days of classical English oratory in the House of Commons in the eighteenth century. Sheridan's philippic in the famous proceedings against Warren Hastings in 1788 lasted four-and-a-half hours. The actress Mrs. Siddons was among those who fainted. The painter Thomas Gainsborough caught the chill which brought on his last illness. The historian Edward Gibbon looked on with a colder eye, recording afterward: "Sheridan, on the close of his speech, sunk [sic] into Burke's arms, but I called this morning, and he is perfectly well. A good actor." In his last great speech in defense of the American colonies, the aged and dying Chatham, after hours on his feet, sank into a dramatic coma. At the Free Trade Hall in Manchester in 1872, Disraeli spoke to the local Conservative Association for three-and-a-quarter hours. He sustained himself with white brandy, indistinguishable to the observer from the water taken with it, and he had consumed two bottles by the end. We have a perfect description of him in the House of Commons. When he prepared to utter what he called one of his "good things"—a well-prepared *mot* or barb against an opponent—he drew his handkerchief from the rear pocket in his morning coat, and wiped his brow nonchalantly with a dramatic pause. Then he let free his *mot*.

It was all great acting, and oratory in the United States has suffered for a long time because both the Senate and the House have long ceased to be arenas of oratorical duels, even on important issues. There is hardly anyplace to practice the theater of oratory in America. Even the actor in the White House offers no solace, because he uses his craft to obscure his message, not to reinforce it. The oratorical actors of ages past wished us to remember what was said; Reagan wishes us to remember the sayer. The harshness of the message (war in Central America, say, or stinginess at home) is smoothed by the affability of the messenger. Acting it may be; oratory it is not.

IN TIMES PAST, the acting was to reinforce the eloquence, the eloquence was to reinforce the reasoning. It must be realized that the object of great oratory was to appeal to the reason of the audiences. Few orators in any age combined close reasoning with majestic eloquence more masterfully than Macaulay when he was in the House of Commons. It is hard to quote only a brief passage, because the power accumulated from sentence to sentence, as in this speech arguing (as early as 1833) that civil and political disabilities should be removed from the Jews:

> The honorable member for Oldham tells us that the Jews are naturally a mean race, a sordid race, a moneygetting race. . . . Such, Sir, has in every age been the reasoning of bigots. They never fail to plead in justification of persecution the vices which persecution has engendered. England has been to the Jews less than half a country; and we revile them because they do not feel for England more than a half patriotism. We treat them as slaves, and wonder that they do not regard us as brethren. We drive them to mean occupations, and then reproach them for not embracing honorable professions. We long forbade them to possess land, and we complain that they chiefly occupy themselves in trade. We shut them out from all the paths of ambition; and then we despise them for taking refuge in avarice. . . . Let us do justice to them. Let us open to them the door of the House of Commons. Let us open to them every career in which ability and energy can be displayed. Till we have done this, let us not presume to say that there is no genius among the countrymen of Isaiah, no heroism among the descendants of the Maccabees.

Such reasoning required speeches of several hours on great occasions, and people listened to them because the reasoning was lit with the flame of great oratory. Macaulay was trained, of course, in the classics; and the Romans, in the manner of Cicero, were great orators. It is very Roman advice that Cato the Censor gave: "*Rem tene, verba sequentur.*" ("Stick to the point, and the words will come.")

But mention of the Romans only returns us to the problem of common allusions. John Adams was, like many of the revolutionary leaders, a great orator. His favorite statesman was Sully, but he urged those who must speak and write to read Sallust, and find other models in Caesar and Xenophon. In 1776 he went back to the example of Epaminondas, who had welded the Thebans into a fighting force strong enough to defeat the Spartans. In 1777 he told his son, John Quincy, to read Thucydides in Greek, "the most perfect of all human languages," adding that

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Thucydides was "full of instruction to the orator, the statesman, the general, as well as to the historian and philosopher." Abigail Adams sometimes quoted Sully to her husband in her letters, along with allusions to the Bible and to Shakespeare. G. M. Trevelyan once said that in the seventeenth century people quoted the Bible; in the eighteenth century, they quoted the classics; in the nineteenth century, Shakespeare; and in the twentieth century, they quote each other. This was devastating enough a generation ago. But now what do our politicians quote? A television commercial: "Where's the beef?"

In lamenting the decline of oratory in our time, we lament a far deeper loss in our civilization. (The lack of common allusions can be observed by any university teacher who, a generation ago, could be fairly confident that his students had read *outside* their assigned texts; but not now.) We cannot just blame the politicians. In this as in other respects, we get the politicians we deserve. If they do not inspire us with their oratory, it is partly because we are unwilling to be inspired. It is highly unlikely that, even as little as twenty years later, the rhetoric of Martin Luther King Jr. would appeal to us in the same way. Politicians need something to work from. All they have now are reckless, self-interested, and pampered groups. De Gaulle once asked in exasperation how anyone could govern a nation that made 230 kinds of cheese. It was the cry of an authoritarian against the extreme individualism of his people. But one may well ask how a politician can address great oratory to people who are now so self-absorbed.

OUR LACK of trust in our politicians has deprived them of their own language. George Orwell's most famous essay, "Politics and the English Language," has always seemed misleading to me. He ignored the fact that there are many languages—the language of the law, of science, of commerce, of the military, of poetry, and so on—and that each serves a different function. It was jejune of Orwell to suggest that he had made a point by demonstrating how politicians might rewrite a passage from the Holy Scripture. Politicians are not engaged in the writing of Scripture. "Make the world safe for democracy" is an arrangement of words in which the poet or the philosopher—and especially the linguistic philosopher—would be hard put to find any meaning, and so would dismiss as charlatanry. But in the context, and for the purpose it was used by Wilson, it had a clear meaning; and in that context, it still has that meaning. It not only gave Americans a reason to fight beyond their own interests, it also transformed the First World War, which no European power could by then win or end, into more than a meaningless and pitiless contest between decaying empires; and in so doing, it gave men hope. "Make the world safe for democracy" was as majestic in its time as Elizabeth's exhortation to her troops was in hers.

But if a politician today said, "Make the world safe for democracy," he would be laughed off television. How can any politician be an orator if Dan Rather chooses which of his words will be reported? Rather would probably say: "In an effort to revive flagging public support for his troubled campaign, the Democratic candidate today made an old-fashioned plea to 'make the world safe for democracy' "—and so in one sentence take away the politician's right to use his own language to elevate people and their purposes.

It is *we* who drive the politician to use jargon, words that evade and obscure the truth. It is *we* who make them say that troops are "advisers," that war plans are "scenarios," that invasions are "incursions," that bombing is "air support." It is *we* who are afraid of the truth that politicians would tell us. We do not wish to be confronted. We do not wish to be challenged. We do not wish to be inspired. We do not wish to act.

THE PURPOSE of oratory is to persuade men and women to act or (which is the same thing) not to act with a joint will and purpose. But a nation with its ears in a Sony Walkman does not wish to act, or even to face the moral difficulties in the choice not to act. There have been few greater oratorical duels than that between William Pitt the Younger when he led Britain in the war against Napoleon and Charles James Fox, who opposed the continuation of the war. When in 1800 Pitt said that Britain must "pause" before agreeing to negotiate with Napoleon, Fox rose in the Commons and poured out a speech of almost unrivaled power:

> Gracious God, sir! Is war a state of probation? Is peace a rash system? Is it dangerous for nations to live in amity with each other?. . . . Cannot this state of probation be as well undergone without adding to the catalogue of human sufferings? "But we must pause!" What, must the bowels of Great Britain be torn out—her best blood spilled—her treasures wasted—that you may make an experiment? Put yourselves—oh! that you would put yourselves in the field of battle, and learn to judge at the sort of horrors that you would excite. . . .
>
> . . . if a man were to be present now at a field of slaughter, and were to inquire for what they were fighting—"Fighting!" would be the answer; "they are not fighting; they are *pausing*." "Why is that man expiring? Why is that other writhing with agony? What means this implacable fury?" The answer must be: "You are quite wrong, sir; you deceive yourself—they are not fighting—do not disturb them—they are merely *pausing*. This man is not expiring with agony—that man is not dead—he is only *pausing*! Lord help you, sir! They are not angry with one another; they have no cause to quarrel; but their country thinks that there should be a *pause*. All that you see, sir, is nothing like fighting—there is no harm, no cruelty, nor bloodshed in it whatever; it is nothing more than a political pause."

It will be easy for some to approve this oratory because Fox was calling for peace and not war. But the fact is that the oratory of both Pitt and Fox, as also all great oratory in all ages, was addressed to a nation which expected its politicians to appeal to it in strenuous moral terms.

Oratory will return when people look to their politicians for leadership. It is not the politicians who are now failing to give that leadership; it is we who do not wish to receive it from our politicians, or indeed from anyone else. □

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A measured assessment of this year's campaign rhetoric.

Oh, Shut Up

By P. J. O'Rourke

IF THE campaign speech had been invented this election year, it would be hailed as a breakthrough in democracy—as a far better way to learn about a candidate's ideas than thirty-second TV spots or acrimonious gabfests passing for debates. At last! A simple, intelligent way to learn what our politicians propose: have them stand up and tell us. However, as a nation we are willing to do practically anything for our political candidates except listen to their speeches. And for good reason. The speeches stink.

Eighteen speeches by the three men who have been the most prominent 1984 Presidential candidates are examined below: five speeches by Walter Mondale, five by Gary Hart, and eight by Ronald Reagan. Analysis is limited strictly to printed texts. Every attempt has been made to remain ideologically neutral. And only four basic critical questions are asked: (1.) Is the speech substantive? (2.) Does it make sense? (3.) Is it consistent? (4.) Is it English?

Jesse Jackson has been left out of the critique. His style of speaking differs too greatly from the other candidates'. Jackson normally does not use a text. His oratory depends for effect on nuance, gesture, and audience response. This is not to say his speeches are better or worse than the others. But some medium other than print—video tape, perhaps—would be necessary to evaluate them.

The speeches criticized here were provided by the respective campaign committees or, in the case of President Reagan, by the White House press office. Presumably the texts were scrutinized and slips of tongue and mind deleted. Of course, they got help writing these declamations. But this is no excuse. They are free to dispense with that help. They gave these speeches, put their names on them, and nowhere blamed anyone else for their composition. In other words, this is the candidates putting their best feet in their mouths.

The speeches are remarkably alike. Read these three quotations and see if you can guess who's saying which:

(1.) . . . *Americans have always believed that man can shape the future.*
(2.) *People must be part of our planning.*
(3.) *A President is our leader.*

P. J. O'Rourke, former editor-in-chief of the *National Lampoon*, is the author of *Modern Manners: Etiquette for Very Rude People* (Dell).

It's (1.) Hart; (2.) Reagan; and (3.) Mondale. Not that it matters. Empty phrases like these are a staple in all the texts. The empty phrases fall into several categories. There is the tautological:

Only better is better.

HART

There's nothing more basic to the principles of America than that we are in this country and in this society together.

MONDALE

The grossly self-evident:

To get the economy going again will take people.

MONDALE

Families stand at the center of society. . . .

REAGAN

And the meaningless—which can be achieved by using vague words in vague ways:

We speak about progress but only mouth political conventions—conventions which tell us there are boundaries to our thoughts. . . .

HART

Then there are the "I hardly need say" sayings. This is when politicians begin sounding like someone's great aunt on an Orange Pekoe bender:

We must see the world as it really is.

MONDALE

We must move beyond the solutions of the past which do not work.

HART

Our National Parks are the envy of the world.

REAGAN

I have postulated two rules for empty phrases in case you'd like to make some of your own:
(1.) If the antithetical statement is absurd, then the original statement didn't need to be made.

You can test this by taking key words in the passage under consideration and substituting their antonyms. For instance, these two examples from better American orators of the past show that their ringing phrases were *not* empty:

We have something to fear besides fear itself.

Ask what your country can do for you.

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Both are arguable positions. But try Walter Mondale's "We need a people's Democrat who believes in strength. . . ." The opposite of that is, "We need an animals' Democrat who believes in flab."

(2.) If a statement could have believably been made by Mussolini, Gene McCarthy, Mao, and Papa Doc Duvalier—not to mention Mondale, Hart, and Reagan—the statement is probably blather:

Nothing will stop us because the future is made for [insert appropriate nation].

The loss of even one of our splendid [insert appropriate nationality] *is an enormous price to pay.*

I am seeking the [insert appropriate political office] *to restore to our nation a renewed sense of purpose.*

The world is progressing, the future is bright and no one can change this general trend of history.

The first three are Mondale, Reagan, and Hart, respectively. The fourth actually is Mao.

The best empty phrases, however, defy analysis because they defy comprehension of any kind—e.g., Gary Hart: "I am running for the Presidency because I believe the Democratic Party and the country as a whole need a new generation of leadership to prevent this nation from continuing its backward slide into the future."

A candidate's empty phrases are bad but perhaps excusable. After all, there is an ancient tradition of palaver in political oratory. Cicero, in his speech *contra Verres*, addressed the Roman Senate with such lines as, "Day and night you cannot fail to remember your courageous father, your wise grandfather, the noble father of your wife."

WHAT IS MORE annoying than empty language is clumsy use of the language. It's sometimes fun to listen to bad music, but it's never fun to listen to bad musicians.

Reagan says of Central America, "the crisis is serious," and he proclaims December 17 through 23 as the horribly named "National Drunk and Drugged Driving Awareness Week." Mondale tells the California Democratic Convention he never thought he "would see the sting of the grapes of wrath again living in our lives." He says, "There is a reason why over half of the American people don't even bother to vote anymore. You have your reasons; I have mine." He says of the Equal Rights Amendment, "I will get that thing ratified in the part of the Constitution where it's supposed to be," and argues that the Democratic Party has a "special responsibility to reach out and help lighten the burden of the injured, the oppressed, the discriminated [sic] in this country." And Hart announces, "The gender gap isn't a signal for Democrats to sit on their hands about women's equality," adding that he's angry because "the future of my children has become a political trophy instead of a national goal."

The candidates' speeches are primitive. The easiest way to add emphasis and urgency to speech, as any child knows, is through repetition. Mondale strains so hard at getting a word to appear twice in one sentence that he ends up saying he admires scam artists: "I learned it wasn't enough to respect people on the make; we also had to respect people who couldn't make it." When Hart repeats words, he loses track of what they mean: "Women can no longer be kept down, paid down, and let down by the male population of America." When women are "paid down" does someone stand on a chair and drop money on their heads or make a down payment on them or what? In the same speech Hart asks the audience, "How has progress been achieved when women are half free, half paid, half in poverty, and have yet to get their fair share of political power?" Could it be that Hart is punning? It would seem an inappropriate moment for that. And nowhere else in these speeches does Hart attempt levity.

The candidates do occasionally venture a simile or metaphor. In Gary Hart's case the results are, well, mixed. "This doesn't imply any less concern about the way the pie is divided, but it does declare a fundamental new emphasis on making the pie grow again." Or worse than mixed: "These crude reworkings of the Domino Theory fall of their own weight"—a metaphor doing all it can to validate the argument it is supposed to refute.

Mondale proclaims that because of Hubert Humphrey's leadership, "we did indeed walk into the bright sunshine of human rights." (Even this lame flourish is borrowed from Humphrey himself.) And Reagan says we have "an economy whose engines are humming with open track ahead."

"Engines humming" and "open track ahead" are Americanisms of a kind beloved by the one candidate whose speeches have a semblance of personal style. Reagan's folksiness, however, seems the result of either condescension or simplemindedness. Witness this explanation of the James Watt mess: "Sometimes the one who straightens out a situation uses up so many brownie points he or she is no longer the best one to carry out the duties of day-to-day management." Or, "America is enjoying one humdinger of an economic recovery." Or, "Tragically, too many in Washington have been asking us to swallow a whopper. . . ." No style at all would be an improvement.

THE CANDIDATES have individual as well as collective problems in their speeches. In a word: Mondale is incredible. Hart is incomprehensible. And Reagan is illogical.

Mondale makes a great many promises. Some of his promises are substantive. He would "repeal or delay the indexation of taxes," "cancel the Clinch River Breeder Reactor," "kill the MX and the B-1," and "stop production of poison nerve gas." Some are vague. He would "bolster entrepreneurs and small businesses," "pull labor

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and management together," "restore our global leadership," "help our teachers make this the best-educated generation in history," "undo this crazy Reaganomics," and "bring those interest rates down," "disarm those time bombs ticking away in our toxic waste dumps," and "be fair again." And some of his promises are silly: "By the end of this decade, I want to point to the Supreme Court I appointed, and say, 'Justice is in good hands.' " This would require a new Constitution. "I would convene an international economic summit conference, and I would urge all the major economies of the world, including our own, to begin a policy of economic growth that would permit expanded trade, the re-employment of millions of workers, and relief for the vulnerable economies of the world." In other words, he would hold a sort of international economic air guitar contest.

BUT IT'S NO particular vow that breeds incredulity; it's the great accumulation of pledges without any explanation of how they'd be put into force. Mondale seems to recognize the problem, but aggravates it with a poor defense. After making twenty-five distinct promises to the delegates at the Florida State Democratic Convention, Mondale asks, "Where would America be without promises? Where would America be if Franklin Roosevelt hadn't promised to put millions of Americans back to work? . . . . Where would we be if John F. Kennedy hadn't promised to get this nation moving again? Where would we be if Hubert Humphrey and Lyndon Johnson hadn't promised civil rights to this country?"

Where indeed? In fact, we'd be right where we are now. Where we'd be without the *actions* of Franklin Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, Hubert Humphrey, and Lyndon Johnson is, of course, another matter.

Mondale's credibility is further undermined by a tendency to overstatement:

. . . there are hundreds of thousands of decent American families living in their cars, roaming aimlessly around this country. . . .

There has never been such a comprehensive onslaught against social justice in modern times as that which followed from the adoption of Reaganomics.

This overstatement is combined with a touch of vainglory:

I've traveled this nation more than any living American.

All my public career, I've been working on the problems of children.

I've spent my life in education, science, and research. . . .

That egocentricity sometimes dissolves in frivolity:

Right now, today, on this 100th Anniversary of our Civil Service, I would try as President to stop the ridiculing and deriding of the services of millions of decent Americans who are public servants and honor them for their work and their service to all of us.

He'd pass a law against making fun of the Post Office.

Mondale doesn't lie. Only once in these five speeches do I catch him in an outright untruth. (In his address to the Iowa Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner, Mondale says he's honored to follow "the eighteen brilliant speakers who preceded me.") Still, the overall impression gained from reading Mondale's speeches is of near maniacal troth-plighting and consequent unreliability. This is a shame because, buried in his Santa's list for good little voters, Mondale has a rational and heartfelt point to make: America should be a fit place for everyone, not just the lucky, rich, and able. Too bad the message is lost.

GARY HART tries to be more substantive. Sometimes he succeeds. In his speech, "Making Our Military Work," Hart proposes that we adopt the British regimental system to give soldiers greater pride in their units and greater investment in the well-being of their comrades. He makes a case against Pentagon staff quagmires with this persuasive if not completely accurate analogy: "In an industry, bureaucratic behavior leds to Penn Central and Chrysler. In Government, it leads to massive spending with little effect. In war, it leads to defeat."

Hart's speech titled "National Industrial Policy: A New Shape and Weight" is a complete mess. In outlining his industrial plan, Hart says, "the creation of a national industrial policy should not require the federal government to develop a line-by-line blueprint for the future," and he argues against establishing "heavy-handed government planning agencies." He then proposes a "Reconstruction Finance Corporation" and a "new Department of Trade." He promotes his and Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan's "Rebuilding of America" bill, saying it would give "the first formal accounting of our need for major investment in public infrastructure." He says, "We need a process initiated at the highest level of government . . . to bring about industry-by-industry agreements on modernization and growth." And he calls for "a new comprehensive program of economic security for every American worker."

Now, all these may be beneficial plans. They may even be possible. But it's hard to see how they can be put forward in good conscience by the man who says we need "a new economics which goes beyond the traditional Democratic assumption that the only way to make our economy grow is through massive government spending."

The fog of Hart's ideas is thickened by ignorant and silly language:

We must envision and promote substantive progress in the region. . . .

These are my core beliefs.

We must make equality for women and minorities the truth, not a concession.

The world is defined by what we know. The status quo. Yet the tide of history flows against us. (A paragraph, complete as quoted, which pops up apropos of nothing in the middle of his address to NOW.)

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This isn't a time to be a liberal or a conservative. It's a time to rethink.

Or maybe just think in the first place.

REAGAN DOES NOT refute himself. But he makes it easy for others to do so. His speeches are rife with logical fallacy. Reagan's faults of reasoning are, indeed, so distinct that ancient proper names exist for them. Many were identified by Aristotle more than two thousand years ago.

To take a simple example, Reagan mentions the christening of Lech Walesa's daughter. He says seven thousand Poles attended the christening, "expressing their belief that the family remains the foundation of freedom." This can be put into the form of syllogism thus:

Major Premise: christenings are held to express a belief that the family remains the foundation of freedom.

Minor Premise: seven thousand Poles saw a christening.

Conclusion: seven thousand Poles believe that the family remains the foundation of freedom.

This is the fallacy of *post hoc ergo propter hoc* or, perhaps in this case, *ad hoc ergo propter hoc*. (And—though it is not the purpose of this article to criticize beliefs and assumptions—the Major Premise is demonstrably untrue.)

A more serious example of a *post hoc* fallacy appears in the same speech. Reagan says, ". . . three times as many families are headed by single parents today as in 1960." And then says, ". . . there is no question that many well-intentioned Great Society-type programs contributed to family break-ups, welfare dependency, and a large increase in births out of wedlock." But the fact that one thing happened after another does *not* mean the first caused the second.

Reagan uses the technique of circular argument (called begging the question, or *petitio principii*) in his speech on Central America: ". . . the United States has a vital interest in preventing a Communist Central America because if our own borders are threatened, then our ability to meet our commitments to protect peace elsewhere in the world . . . would be significantly weakened." And hence our borders would be threatened. This kind of logical progression is sometimes called a Vicious Circle, and not without reason.

Two fallacies much favored by politicians and other misleading people are Arguing from a General Rule to a Special Case and Arguing from a Special Case to a General Rule. Reagan commits both.

The fallacy of the General Rule can be hard to determine. There is nothing invalid about arguing from a general rule to a particular case. It's all a matter of deciding which cases are special. All-out atomic war, having never yet happened and having little chance of happening more than once, probably qualifies. If so, this statement is bunk:

History teaches that wars begin when governments believe the price of aggression is cheap. To keep the peace, we and our allies must be strong enough to convince any potential aggressor that war could bring no benefit, only disaster.

The fallacy of the Special Case is less defensible:

If we do [withdraw U.S. troops from Lebanon], *we'll be sending one signal to terrorists everywhere: They can gain by waging war against innocent people.*

We do not threaten the Soviet Union. . . . We proved this thirty-five years ago when we had a monopoly of nuclear weapons, and could have tried to dominate the world. But we didn't.

A similar argument would be: Germany had greater military strength than France in 1910 but did not attack. Therefore Germany did not attack France in 1914.

Reagan also uses fallacious reasoning in another, more slippery, way. He condemns Syrian reaction to American reconnaissance flights in Lebanon by saying, "Our reconnaissance flights have only one purpose . . . to give the greatest possible protection to our troops." This is the fallacy of Equivocation. "The greatest possible protection for our troops" seems to mean, in the context of this speech, to mean "taking some pictures." But it could mean (and the Syrians apparently think it does mean) "eliminating the enemy."

There is Equivocation again in the statement, "Over the last ten years, the Soviets devoted twice as much of their gross national product to military expenditures as the United States." The Soviet gross national product is different (and smaller) than ours. This is neither a fair nor an illuminating way to compare military spending.

WHEN IN full cry Reagan leaps the bounds of reason entirely. In his speech on Soviet-American relations he tells a hypothetical story of a Russian couple, Ivan and Anya, who find themselves "sharing a shelter from the rain with Jim and Sally, and there was no language barrier to keep them from getting acquainted." Ivan and Anya and their American counterparts discuss their children, livelihoods, ambitions, hobbies, and "making ends meet." When the rain is over they say friendly farewells and "might even have decided that they were all going to get together for dinner some evening soon." From this fable of his own manufacture, Reagan draws the conclusion that Jim, Sally, Ivan, and Tanya "would have proven people don't cause wars." Is it mice? Is it bunnies?

I don't know what the President's mind is doing, but mine boggles.

These candidates have a crying need for a good—even fair—liberal arts education. One longs to send Hart back to college so he can get it out of his system, send Reagan to college in the first place, and lock Mondale up in a rudimentary speech class with a sock in his mouth.

Gary Hart says it best. In what must be the most unattractive campaign promise ever made, he states: "We will all have to go to school every day." O.K., Mondale, Hart, and Reagan—you first. □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Defection as Confection

Paul Mazursky's *Moscow on the Hudson* is about a Soviet saxophonist, a member of a circus band, who feels repressed in Moscow and who defects in New York when the circus is on tour here. The script, by Mazursky and Leon Capetanos, is a succession of sharp contemporary observations, chosen for their pertinence and pungency, then melted down into movie material. For instance,

Moscow on the Hudson
(Columbia)

the saxophonist, Vlad (played by Robin Williams), who had no plans to defect, suddenly decides to do it in Bloomingdale's, whither the K.G.B. has taken the troupe for a half-hour's shopping en route to the airport and return. Freedom is raised to the point of irresistibility by overwhelming consumerism. The idea is comic, because of the transparent chic of the setting, and it's also bitter, because it's credibly reductive of both Soviet and American views. And how does Mazursky handle it? Vlad, fleeing the K.G.B. agents, crawls hurriedly behind the sales counter on the ground floor and puts his head under a salesgirl's skirt.

This action, plus the girl's author-imposed response—she smiles down sweetly and says, "Are you enjoying yourself?"—is the film in epitome. Good ideas, which Mazursky sometimes gets, are simply not safe in his hands.

The film begins on a Manhattan bus as Vlad answers a question, in English, from a stranger asking directions. This opening is to assure us that, though the real beginning is in Moscow and is spoken in Russian, with English subtitles, we are not doomed to a completely subtitled picture. Flashing back to Moscow, we see Vlad with his family and at work and at amorous play in a borrowed apartment. (His girlfriend reaches climax intoning the names of designer jeans that she wants as presents from New York.) We also see long shopping queues and K.G.B. harassment, including arrest of Jews bearing signs that presumably ask for the right to emigrate. All of this might be both amusing and moving—as it has been since *Ninotchka* (1939)—if it weren't for overdone performances by Vlad's grandfather, a retired clown, and Vlad's best friend, an unhappy clown; and if it weren't for the smeary-colored cinematography by Donald McAlpine that matches the blowzy overacting. McAlpine is the Australian who first came to international attention with his fine work on *My Brilliant Career* (TNR, February 9, 1980). He shows again here that a cinematographer is at the mercy of his director.

The salesgirl at Bloomingdale's, who in time becomes Vlad's girlfriend, is an Italian émigré. The store security guard is a black man who considers himself an émigré from Alabama. A lawyer, who suddenly appears in the middle of the crisis and befriends Vlad, is a Cuban émigré. Neat? That the guard volunteers to take Vlad home to his crowded Harlem apartment and that the lawyer is eager to help are also too neat and are about as believable as the salesgirl's cute remark to the stranger who puts his head under her skirt.

Mazursky's unsteady hand keeps on adulterating fairly fresh possibilities with weary formulas. Lucia, the Italian émigré, becomes an American citizen, and we attend the naturalization ceremony in a courtroom full of mixed nationalities. (The judge who administers the oath is—you can probably finish this sentence yourself—black and a woman.) After the Italian family party to celebrate this event, Vlad tries to get Lucia to move in with him; but, though she loves him, freedom is on her mind this day, and she refuses to entail it. So they quarrel and part. Her wish to preserve freedom, emphasized by this day, is a good enough notion; but Mazursky fritters it away in the most banal Hollywood manner by having her turn up meekly at Vlad's place near the finish because she misses him. Vlad says he missed her, too, though we haven't seen it. The real reason for the reunion is that Mazursky doesn't want to send the customers home disconsolate.

The film's basic motion is Vlad's discovery that he hasn't moved from hell to heaven. That basic motion could hardly be more naïve, but it might still have been affecting if Mazursky didn't interfere so didactically with his own work. The Bloomingdale guard's Harlem family, in a crowded apartment, is a pat analogue of Vlad's family in its crowded Moscow apartment. Vlad's various jobs—including street vendor of stupid joke novelties and limousine chauffeur hustling items to rich clients—underscore heavily that he has moved from a society where one joins a long queue for toilet paper to a society where things have to be invented to keep buyers happily buying. Vlad's low point, which shatters his last illusions about the Manhattan earthly paradise, is of course a mugging. Later, his Cuban lawyer takes him to an all-night coffee shop where Vlad sounds off about his American disappointments. He begins to abuse a quiet man at the end of the counter. The man rises slowly and turns out to be, first, gigantic (a Chaplin touch, which Mazursky doesn't ex-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

The Good Fight. Documentary, politically incomplete but personally gripping. Survivors of the Lincoln Brigade remember the Spanish Civil War. (Reviewed 4/23/84)

Romancing the Stone. Spoofing the spurious. A woman who writes wild adventure romances gets entangled in adventures wilder than her fiction. Clever. (5/7/84)

Sugar Cane Alley. Euzhan Palcy, a black Martinique woman, tells a tender, vivid story about a black Martinique schoolboy's struggle to rise. (4/30/84)

This Is Spinal Tap. Sharp-toothed parody of a documentary about a British rock group in the U.S. Funny even when you're not laughing. (5/14/84)

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ploit), and, second, a Soviet émigré (which Mazursky does exploit). After a pat lesson in values from the stranger, another man walks past the coffee-shop window carrying a sparkler. It is dawn of Independence Day! (The theaters showing this film do not provide airplane sick-bags.)

The film ends three times before it actually finishes: once after Vlad gets the news of his grandfather's death (brought to him in a letter inexplicably delivered by a new Soviet émigré, a Jew); once after the coffee-shop scene; once after the girlfriend's return. After each of these endings, Mazursky inserts long shots of the city over which we expect the closing credits to crawl. But he wants more—the Big Picture. So he plods on to a weak surprise gag with a K.G.B. agent, and he ends with Vlad playing his sax in the plaza in front of the Plaza as the camera pulls up and away. (A finish reminiscent of Coppola's *The Conversation*.) That saxophone plaint is meant, I suppose, to convey complexity: loneliness for the homeland, gratitude for easier breathing here, realization that ideals are dangerous because they disguise and befoul true benefits. That's what I *suppose* Mazursky meant the music to mean; I assume he didn't also mean that his title is accurate.

As Vlad, Robin Williams is better than he was in his previous films because he doesn't spend most of his time scrabbling for ways to break out of straight acting into the vaudeville that made his reputation. His Russian role—beard and language and accented English—give him the "mask" he apparently needs; and the result is a performance something like an affectionate animal, warm but squirmy. Maria Conchita Alonso, as the Italian, Cleavant Derricks, as the guard, and almost everyone else in the cast trot out a facile assortment of readings and responses that can only be called ham. For them, as for the hammy look of the film and its tonal wobble, Mazursky is of course responsible.

He does use music with good showbiz lilt. (The best moment in *Tempest* was "New York, New York" on a Greek island.) But he relies on music to redeem scenes, rather than to support them. For most of his films, Mazursky has chosen famous directors as role-models—Fellini, Truffaut, and Antonioni, for example. Here he seems to have chosen Lubitsch, with possibly a touch of Wilder (who, besides his own later work, was co-author of *Ninotchka*). But Mazursky doesn't perceive that *Ninotchka* and *To Be or Not to Be*, for all their wit and charm, are products of conviction, not oily machines to exploit topicalities.

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ROBERT BRUSTEIN ON THEATER

The Premature Death of Modernism

The demise of modernism is frequently proclaimed these days—most eloquently by my futurist friend Daniel Bell. But as Mark Twain famously remarked upon reading his own obituary in a newspaper, the news of this death has been vastly exaggerated. An upstart movement which likes to thumb its nose at conservative established trends, modernism often behaves like a spiteful teenager daring you to smack him; and it may be that, like many such rebellious postures, these sassy attitudes disguise a secret desire for attention and approval. The obligatory provocativeness of the avant-garde can no doubt be impudent, annoying, even self-serving, but the modernist movement won't evaporate if we simply pretend it doesn't exist. In the theater, at least, modernism is still responsible for a great deal that is vital and original in contemporary dramatic expression, even though most of its discoveries and inventions are within minutes conveniently co-opted by commerce and the media.

Through the Leaves
by Franz Xaver Kroetz

Laurie Anderson in Concert

A surprising development of one recent form of modernism has been the revival of a meticulous painstaking realism. This, after all, was how the mod-

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ern dramatic movement began—in the naturalistic novels of Zola and the domestic plays of Ibsen—but for over a half century now realism has been primarily identified with mainstream theater. In the United States, however, largely because of David Mamet, a faithful verisimilitude is gaining new respect among serious critics, while in Germany, largely because of Franz Xaver Kroetz, such realism has recently been identified with the most advanced form of playwriting.

KROETZ'S *Through the Leaves*, a joint presentation of Interart Theater and Mabou Mines, represents a good introduction to modernist realism, since it is being offered in a superb production by JoAnne Akalaitis. As in most of his work, Kroetz is here concerned with moments of crisis in the lives of desperate depressed people living barely at the level of consciousness; and, again as in most of his work, his treatment of this victim class is pitiless, harsh, remorseless, cruel, redeemed only by fitful flashes of compassion. Annette is a middle-aged spinster who makes her living by cutting up "utility meats" for dog food; Victor is a coarse unemployed roustabout who occasionally services her crudely in a room behind the shop. Annette keeps a diary of their relationship, recording her longings for romance with all the punctuation marks intact ("Is there still a chance for love when you're forty—question mark?"). But Victor is not only frequently unfaithful, he also deserts her frequently for long periods of time ("Come back!" pleads the diary, "exclamation point and period"). Each time Victor returns, however, he is more abusive, insensitive, and violent. Witnessing the lovemaking of this unappealing, overweight couple is sometimes indistinguishable from watching two sides of beef having their loins rubbed in her butcher shop; at one point he tries to take her while she is chopping up a mess of calves' liver.

Annette's generous if bovine love for Victor, however, is not entirely free of resentment, and there are occasional hints that she would like to carve him up with her cleaver. Still, in exchange for his intermittent company and occasional spurts of pleasure, she passively accepts her role in what amounts to her complete abasement and humiliation, never totally losing her cheerfulness even when he deserts her for good at the end ("All alone—longing—period").

Kroetz, a Marxist, makes little effort to dramatize the dignity of working-class people, whom he shows to be leading lives of noisy desperation. Relatively tender toward women, he displays no feeling whatever for his males, who are almost invariably depicted as human brutes living at the lowest scale of existence. As a result, his plays usually emerge as laborious documentaries of man's inhumanity to man (and, more often, to women), making no concessions either to theatricality or to the pleasure principle—grim and squalid vignettes of humanity in extreme circumstances, a poetry of aesthetic abstinence.

But Kroetz provides rich occasions for production, and this one is exceptional. In Douglas Stein's extraordinary double setting—the butcher shop complete with cow's head and animal organs in the display case, and the back room decorated with plastic furniture, crocheted calendar, and a forlorn green rubber plant—Akalaitis creates an atmosphere that is convincing and uncompromising in its reality, yet always rhythmic and stylized. As Annette, Ruth Malaczech simpers and cajoles, her face frozen in the blank look of a grinning marionette as she saws away at a thigh bone, while Fred Neumann as Victor sketches a harrowing portrait of a brutal sexist male who uses female flesh purely as a source of friction. Roger Downey's translation sensibly transfers the action to an American working-class suburb, where clamorous rock music ("This is not a love song") crashes through the tainted air like splintering glass.

LAURIE Anderson represents an entirely different species of modernism, one much more indebted to the current techniques of rock concerts and therefore capable of drawing large mass audiences. A lot has already been written about this *sui generic* performance artist; I managed to see her for the first time at the Boston Opera House during a recent tour. The first thing one encounters upon entering the theater is a massive media board monopolizing two or three rows of seats, while the open stage, monitored by an army of technicians, is festooned with bizarre musical instruments, pipes, wires, screens, lights, courtesy telephones, and synthesizers. Anderson is entirely a creature of technology, which constitutes both her medium and her subject. When the performers enter, greeted by a screaming audience, they are wearing strangely decorated ski masks recalling those seen on the terrorists at the Munich Olympics, while their leader, dressed in a white silken suit, begins to speak in an unctuous baritone voice of the differences between the numbers "0" and "1" ("being a zero is no worse than being number one").

THIS IS Laurie Anderson, her voice treated by a synthesizer, and the monologue is a prologue for her first musical number, "Sharkey's Day." As in most rock concerts, the overamplification makes it impossible to gauge the quality of the music—everything is electrified in this evening, including Anderson's auburn hair. But whereas such traditional groups as The Grateful Dead, for example, eschew costumes, props, and light shows, concentrating almost exclusively on an impact, this is a highly complicated mixed media event, similar to video rock productions, combining film, animations, dramatizations, projections, lights, and thumping acoustical rhythms to create a synaesthesic influence on the eyes and eardrums.

Anderson is clearly an original, with a sly sense of humor, which makes it sometimes difficult to tell whether she is satirizing the Computer Age or acting as its agent and volunteer. Playing such instruments as a synclavier, a vocoder, and a violin that works with magnetic tape rather than strings, she alternates between songs, dances, and monologues, as images of multicolored trees, snowy television screens, people moving down subway escalators, Japanese ideograms, revolving radar screens, airplanes skywriting "Aloha," dancing dolls, and her own haloed talking features swarm behind her. In one monologue, documented with a series of "While You Were Out" phone messages, she speaks to herself on a courtesy phone while playing a huge electric sitar; in another, she sings to the accompaniment of illustrated doodles concerning her upcoming tour ("banana hats for the musicians are a waste of money—they'll probably refuse to wear them"). The voice of William Burroughs comes over the loudspeaker telling us that "Language is a virus from outer space," and the screen fills with the various ways we use the

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alphabet to create shorthand words (G-string, K-rations, ZZZZZZs, etc.).

Anderson connects best with the audience when she takes it into her confidence ("I don't know about your dreams, but mine—are really hackneyed—the themes are infantile"), but what she is continually communicating, in her cool, winsome, appealing style, are messages of anomie and tedium. I came away impressed by effects but feeling as affectless as the performer, and totally puzzled about her purpose. For Laurie Anderson, at present, the medium really *is* the message, though, somehow, her personality manages to be the message too.

There is no predicting the future development of such a gifted innovator, but watching her I began to understand a little better why the death of modernism is so often being proclaimed. Like a few other avant-garde artists of her generation I could name, Laurie Anderson is an offspring of the recent marriage between modernism and the media, where the feverish need for new products, new personalities, new cover stories is creating a condition in which embryonic genius is prematurely canonized and embryonic art gets stuck at the level of technological effects and synthetic dazzle. When modernism becomes just another agency for selling tickets, or for increasing the circulation of newspapers and magazines, then the alternatives for the avant-garde artist are either to retire into obscurity in the face of the next newly discovered genius-personality or to invent even wilder ways to get attention. What gets lost in this process are the tranquil conditions required for any penetrating exploration of experience, so necessary to artistic growth. Still, modernism will continue to survive, if only because it contains within it great diversity, not only of forms and approaches but of artists dedicated to pressing against the boundaries of the possible. And all those with a stake in a healthy culture know that it must survive as our most effective antidote to stagnation.

THE VICAR BICKERS

Caveat: Realism, Reagan, and Foreign Policy by Alexander M. Haig Jr.

(Macmillan, 384 pp., $17.95)

The relationship of a President to a Secretary of State, Dean Acheson once observed, "is essentially one of partnership." It is, of course, an unequal partnership, one in which, as Alexander Haig notes, "The Secretary of State is emphatically the junior partner." The personal memoir of President Reagan's first junior partner, *Caveat* is the story of a partnership that failed.

Caveat has been advertised as the most candid book ever written by a high-ranking former cabinet officer about an Administration still in office. If so, the candor is not particular illuminating. A close reading of this book does not reveal—at least, it did not to this reviewer—a clear and persuasive answer as to why the partnership failed. In the end there's little more to learn from Haig's account of his trials and tribulations as Secretary of State than has already emerged from contemporary accounts in the press.

Although his account of why the partnership failed is not in the end persuasive, Haig convincingly shows why his lot had to be as it was—a rather difficult one. To the Reagan inner circle Haig was an outsider, chosen in part because of his Presidential aspirations. The aim was to co-opt this ambitious and experienced man, to quiet what might otherwise become a critical and influential voice. If this standard version is true—and Haig's account corroborates it—then part of the reason for choosing Haig as Secretary of State was also part of the reason for regarding him with suspicion once in office.

Haig did not enjoy, then, the standing of Weinberger or Casey. He was the new boy, to be watched closely for any tricks. Moreover, he represented a department and a realm of activity that were not dear to the heart of the President and his closest associates. The outside world was an unwanted diversion to an Administration whose great priority was domestic economic policy. The person who called the Administration's attention to international affairs would have borne a special onus even if he had managed to do so in an adroit and engaging manner.

A Secretary of State not only must remind an Administration of the world beyond the nation. He must also, in a very real sense, represent this world in the high councils of government. This, too, could not have been a very pleasant chore, and Haig indicates as much. The Administration has changed a good deal since its early days in office. Time has given it a more pragmatic and tolerant cast. At the beginning, though, moderation was not so common.

FOR THESE and other reasons, Haig's position at the outset was difficult. But this is not to say that it was impossible, that it could only have ended the way it did. Haig might still be in office had he chosen to behave differently. Though he disagreed with the President on some important issues of policy, the differences were not the kind that meant Haig's alternatives were to betray his convictions or to go. It is true that Reagan is more of an ideologue in foreign policy than Haig. The contest between their outlooks surfaced a number of times, particularly with respect to fashioning a China policy. Haig declares that, more than any other thing that happened while he was Secretary, "the China question convinced me that Reagan's world view was indeed different from my own, and that I could not serve him and my convictions at the same time."

This is the kind of statement—and there are many others in the book—that must be taken with several grains of salt. Reagan's convictions have only seldom prevented him from adjusting to reality. The adjustment may take some time, and it may be attended by an obscurantist rhetoric, but it happens all the same. In the case of China, to use Haig's example, Mr. Reagan's adjustment has already occurred. Indeed, at the close of his book, Haig notes that the President is now largely pursuing the policy that he laid out at the beginning of the Administration. In the end, the policy consequences resulting from these different world views were of marginal significance.

The causes of the failed partnership, then, must be found elsewhere. Haig

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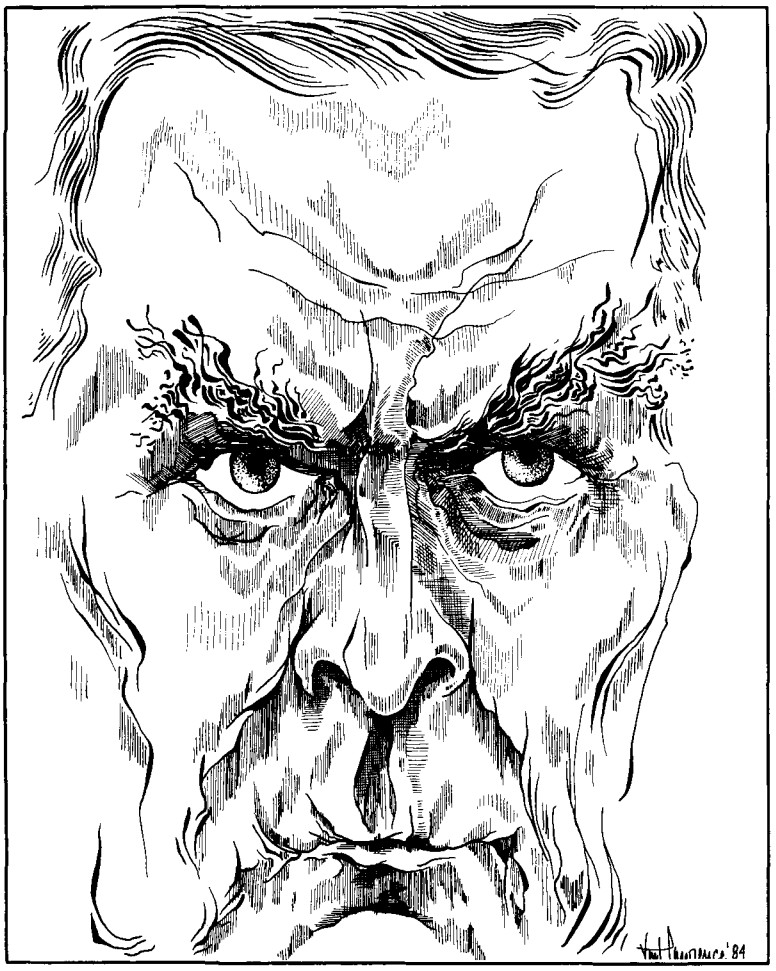
finds them in the way business was conducted by the Administration. Having been told by the President to negotiate and draft a document that established the structure of the foreign policy establishment, the President's aides decided that Mr. Reagan should not be given the opportunity to sign it. Whenever Haig asked one of the President's men about the draft document, National Security Decision Document I (N.S.D.D.I), he was met with evasions. Haig never saw the document again. In his conclusion he writes:

> The document in the original form was never signed. As a result there was no description of duty, no rules, no expression of the essential authority of the President to guide his subordinates in their task. This failure arose from ignorance: Reagan's assistants saw a routine act of government as a novel attempt to preempt power. In fact, it was a plan to share and coordinate those duties in the field of foreign policy that express the President's powers under the Constitution. In the absence of such a charter, there can be no other result than confusion.

The centrality given to the abortive N.S.D.D.I in the book is baffling. Suppose the President had signed the document. Would Haig have invoked it every time he thought a Presidential assistant was violating it? Would he have gone to the President and complained, the same President whom he was unwilling even to ask about the fate of the document? Haig complains that he was mortally handicapped by lack of access to the President. But how would N.S.D.D.I. have resolved this problem? Partnerships at these airy heights are not made workable by signing documents, however artfully drafted. It is difficult to think that someone as experienced in the bureaucracy as Haig can really believe otherwise.

Thus, the reader comes away without a credible explanation of why the partnership failed. Perhaps it was a matter of personal chemistry more than anything else. Haig was a rather frenetic figure. His aggressive style could be unnerving. Moreover, he was acutely aware, as he relates, that no one else at his level had his experience and feel for foreign affairs. He may have conveyed this awareness once too often, not only to his peers but to his senior partner as well.

Haig believes, essentially, in global containment. He thinks that so long as world politics continues to be dominated by the competition between the two superpowers, we cannot pick and choose those places where we must contain Soviet expansion. In a conflict fought for global stakes, what may appear as a marginal interest will be invested with a significance it would not otherwise have, for almost any challenge is likely to be regarded by the challenger (and by third parties) as a test of one's will. Hence the difficulty of distinguishing, in practice, marginal and vital interests. Hence also Haig's tendency to "vitalize" (to coin a Haigism) virtually all interests in contention between this country and the Soviet Union.



ALEXANDER HAIG JR. BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

There is much to be said for this view, particularly when it is based on considerations of realpolitik rather than of ideology. The inner dynamic of great conflicts does work to prevent making a clear distinction between what may otherwise be seen as peripheral and central concerns. Eventually, issues on the periphery have a way of leading to, if not becoming, those in the center, if challenges are not dealt with effectively. The history of Soviet-American rivalry bears these dangers out.

This same history, however, also bears out the dangers of pursuing the logic of global containment. It was this logic that led us to Vietnam and to the ensuing breakdown of domestic consensus on foreign policy. Vietnam was not an aberration in global containment; it was an outcome that was always implicit in this policy. The calculus of global containment is such that a Vietnam was, sooner or later, inevitable.

Still, in Haig's calculus of global containment, what is inevitable is only a ceaseless test of wills with the Soviet Union, a test we can nearly always win if we only show the requisite determination and power. Haig applies this view retrospectively to Vietnam. There, he writes, our primary adversary was the Soviet Union. "If in the beginning we had been willing to go to the Soviet Union and demand an end to the aggression of Hanoi, and if Moscow had believed in our determination, there might very well have been no war." But we chose not to do the obvious and we are living with the consequences.

During his own tenure in office, Haig relates, he urged applying this logic to our dealings with Moscow, and with Moscow's proxies. He inveighs against

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the errors of "incrementalism" and "localizing our response," errors which can only "Vietnamize the situation." In the case of Central America, for example, our interest in the outcome of the conflict in El Salvador required going to the source—Havana and Moscow. "El Salvador, vital though the preservation of the democratic future is, represents a symptom of dangerous conditions in the Americas—Cuban adventurism, Soviet strategic ambition." But Haig found himself virtually alone among the President's advisers. Although "the way was open to solve the problem in Central America, and solve it quickly, through the unequivocal application of pressure," the President's advisers "continued to seek some solution that might bring success . . . without subjecting the President to the risk of what they judged might become a protracted minor war or even a superpower confrontation." The result in El Salvador is the difficult stalemate we now face.

OF COURSE this view of global containment, in which interest and power are successfully reconciled by an act of will, is familiar. At this late date it is startling to find it given such unguarded expression by a person of Haig's experience. If we could always impose our will on Moscow, no doubt things would be different. This happy thought has occurred to others before. It did during the period of Vietnam. But how to have gotten Moscow to stop aiding Hanoi—that was the question. Even with the advantages of hindsight, Haig does not have an answer.

Haig does not apply his theory of the ever-triumphant will to Eastern Europe, though he leaves the impression that he would do so almost everywhere else. Presumably, then, almost everywhere else we enjoy a favorable balance of interest and power in relation to the Soviets. Needless to say, this reflects quite optimistic assumptions about Soviet interests and power. Even if these assumptions were apposite, however, they would dispose of yesterday's difficulties in Vietnam and today's difficulties in Central America only if we discount the will and the capability of local actors. Vietnam provided a dramatic demonstration of the price that may have to be paid for doing so. The price in Central America would, at the worst, still be small in comparison with Vietnam. But a price there would be; and, particularly if we were to go to the Cuban source, it would not be insignificant.

Haig denies that there would have been a significant price to pay had the Reagan Administration only endorsed his policy prescription at the outset. Clearly the former Secretary is right in insisting that there were advantages to be gained in moving quickly and decisively during the first year or so. But the critical issue is whether he is right in believing that the use of force was unnecessary for success in El Salvador. It was unnecessary, of course, if Cuban support of the Salvadoran guerrillas continued to be decisive for the guerrilla effort and if Haig's estimate of Cuba's susceptibility to American pressure was correct. On the latter point Haig notes how nervous Castro was throughout 1981 and into 1982. He may be right. Greater pressure on Cuba might have led Havana into abandoning its support for revolution in Central America. But it is at least as likely that Castro would have kept his nerve and waited to see whether we were in fact prepared to use armed force against him. Haig's optimistic assessment of where his Central America policy would have led probably underestimates Castro's determination. In this it is reminiscent of the underestimation of North Vietnam's determination at the outset of the Vietnam War.

Thus it is no saving grace of Haig's version of global containment that it is based on geopolitical rather than ideological considerations. Had Haig remained in office, the reconciliation of interest and power would likely have proven increasingly elusive. There is no reason to believe that such a reconciliation could have been effected by a mere act of will, a will that triumphs simply because of the interest or the purpose it reflects.

SOVIET-AMERICAN relations apart, Haig devotes more space to the Arab-Israeli conflict than to any of the other diplomatic issues he faced. Many think that Haig was more favorably disposed toward Israel than any other Secretary of State we have had and that this disposition was particularly clear in the crisis arising over the Israeli move into Lebanon.

The precise role Haig played in the events that led to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon has been the subject of considerable speculation and controversy. Certainly Haig was sympathetic in principle with Jerusalem's desire to secure its northern border and more generally

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to restrain the P.L.O. in Lebanon. Viewing the Syrians and the P.L.O. as Soviet allies, Haig was not unhappy at the prospect of their removal from Lebanon. He favored a reconstitution of Lebanon and a restoration of the powers of government to the Lebanese. In the circumstances this probably meant, though he does not say so, a government headed by the Phalangist leader Bashir Gemayel.

A SIMILARITY of purpose does not prove that Haig gave Israel a green light to invade Lebanon. It does establish grounds, however, for plausibly entertaining the notion that he might have done so. Haig is at pains to deny this notion. Throughout his account of the events leading to the war he insists that he repeatedly told high Israeli officials that "unless there was an internationally recognized provocation, and unless Israeli retaliation was proportionate to any such provocation, an attack by Israel into Lebanon would have a devastating effect in the United States."

There is little reason to doubt that Haig said what he says he did. The question is whether in the circumstances this was a green light, or merely a yellow light. One thing is clear. It was not a red light. Haig knew, and had known for months, that the Israeli government was intent on moving against the P.L.O. in Lebanon. He also had reason to know that the operation would likely be on a large scale. Such an operation was not needed merely to clear the P.L.O. out of the south. It was needed if the P.L.O. was to be expelled from the Beirut area and the Israelis were to safeguard their flank from attack by Syrian forces. It was in such circumstances that Jerusalem publicly declared that virtually any move by the P.L.O. anywhere in the world could constitute a casus belli and that Haig voiced his "warning" to Israeli officials.

Zeev Schiff, the military correspondent of the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, has concluded (in *Foreign Policy* magazine and in a forthcoming book) that the light was definitely green. The American nay, he writes, "was so feeble that the Israelis regarded it merely as a diplomatic maneuver designed to exonerate the United States should the military operation go sour." In this the Israelis were not acting unreasonably. Had Haig wanted to place a real roadblock before the Israelis, surely his warnings would have been stronger. Given the circumstances, it was not enough to sound the broad cautionary note he did. It was not enough to speak of an "internationally recognized provocation" and of a "proportionate" response.

Once the war was under way, moreover, Haig made no efforts to hold the Israelis to limited objectives. Within two days they had gone beyond the forty kilometer line, their declared objective at the outset of the war. Haig maintained a sympathetic silence that was only broken by others in the American government. He relates that he was prepared to exploit the striking success of Israeli arms and to create a new beginning out of the war. A real peace was within our grasp. But at that very moment Haig's incumbency came to an end; and "in a series of miscalculations that divided American diplomacy and dissipated American influence," Haig says, "peace was thrown away. The situation we now face in Lebanon is the result."

What was this peace that was presumably within our grasp? The elements of the plan, Haig tells us, were

> withdrawal of all foreign troops, reestablishment of effective government in Lebanon, a safe northern border for Israel. The strategy was to use the shock of the Israeli attack to force the P.L.O. out of Beirut, to make the feuding Lebanese understand at last that their collective peace and security could be achieved only through unity, and finally, to reinforce the incentives for both Syria and Israel not to prolong their adventures in Lebanon.

An admirable plan, certainly. Could Haig have implemented it? There is almost no reason to think so. The Syrians were badly off balance, but they were not yet down. And even if they had been driven out, or been pressured to leave Lebanon, the Israelis in the flush of victory would not have left without a satisfactory peace treaty with a Lebanese government.

In Haig's scheme, the key was the reconstitution of Lebanon. How did Haig think he would achieve this miracle? He does not specifically say, but it appears that he was counting on the Phalangists and on their leader Bashir Gemayel. If so he was taken in quite as much as were the Israelis. Bashir proved to be the ultimate conjurer in the Lebanese juggling game played out in the summer of 1982. Haig does not appreciate it, but he was taken out of a game that he almost surely would have lost.

ROBERT W. TUCKER

Robert W. Tucker is a professor at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and author, with David Hendrickson, of *The Fall of the First British Empire: Origins of the American Revolution* (Johns Hopkins).

A LITTLE COCKNEY CAD

H. G. Wells: Aspects of a Life
by Anthony West

(Random House, 375 pp., $22.95)

Heritage
by Anthony West

(Washington Square Press, 309 pp., $4.95)

H. G. Wells was born in 1866, but the story that these two books tell of him really begins in 1912. At that point in his life Wells was about equally famous and notorious—a writer at the height of his powers, and a philanderer whose scandalous behavior had shocked London society. You'd invite him to dinner, if you had social ambitions, but you wouldn't leave him alone with your daughter.

It was in 1912 that Wells first met Cicily Fairfield, a willful, liberated 19-year-old who had just begun a career in London journalism. For that career she had rejected her real name—too much like a character in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, I suppose—in favor of one out

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of Ibsen, and had begun to sign her writings "Rebecca West," after the heroine of *Rosmersholm*. It was an odd and ominous choice, if you consider what happened to Ibsen's Rebecca, but it had the right defiant note for a clever young feminist on her own. The meeting with Wells was apparently engineered by her; they became lovers, and by the end of 1913 she was pregnant (an accident, Wells maintained; a plot to keep her tied to him, according to her). Their son was born on August 4, 1914—the first day of the Great War, and also of the little war that went on between the lovers for decades, and eventually enlisted their son (*Aspects of a Life* is, you might say, the last shot to be fired).

IT IS HARD to see how Wells ever thought he could manage the life that he planned for himself and Rebecca. He had a wife and two children in a country house in Essex, a full social life in London, and his multiple career as novelist-journalist-prophet to maintain. Yet he evidently expected to see enough of his young mistress to keep her contented, while concealing from the world the fact that she existed.

Only the most extravagant optimist could have imagined that such a program could work; but then, that's what Wells was in those years, England's chief Scientific Optimist, the man who looked into the future and saw there a world made rational by science, with rational government, rational society, rational war, and rational love. An image for that cheerful futurism is the green gas that envelopes the world in Wells's *In the Days of the Comet*, and turns quarrelsome, possessive individuals into happy, polygamous socialists. Wells moved, in those days, in a green gas cloud.

The polygamy in Wells's utopia is important, for Wells was also a Sexual Optimist: the future that he looked forward to would have more and freer sex in it. He must have thought that this new life of his, with a compliant wife at home and a liberated mistress inconspicuously elsewhere, would be just that, and would leave him time enough to do all the other things that interested him too. How could he have believed that he could manage it all?

Yet he not only believed he could, he actually did it. Over the next ten years, while he was writing novels, visiting war fronts, pontificating on war and peace and religion and world government, and eventually producing the massive *Outline of History*, he also managed to keep both wife and mistress if not exactly happy, at least quiet. But the strain on Rebecca West was increasingly great; she not only had the child to rear, she had the loneliness of social ostracism to deal with, and her own career to advance. Eventually the joys of the affair were simply worn away by the friction of lies and quarrels and absences, as such things are, and the lovers at last went their separate ways into their separate fames, leaving stretched between them the reminder of their misadventure, their son Anthony West.

It is not surprising that two such gifted, trying parents should have defined their son not only genetically but also psychologically and imaginatively. Like them he has been a writer for most of his adult life—a novelist, a biographer, an editor, a reviewer. But he has also had another compelling vocation—the re-creation of his parents, and of his relations with them. He has written two novels about them (of which the earlier, *Heritage*, is now reprinted), and his new biography of his father renews his reconstructive—and destructive—reworkings of his parents' lives. I suppose it is inevitable, given the circumstances, that West should feel a need to establish *his* version of the Wells-Rebecca West liaison as the correct one; a child growing up on the edges of two famous lives, in neither of which he seems to belong, is bound to carry a load of resentment into his adult life to be revenged. And what better revenge than a novel about life with Mother and a biography of Father? Still, it is saddening to see how fiercely those old rejections rankle even now, when both the offending parents are dead, and West is in his seventieth year. The indignity hardest to forgive, it seems, is one's own birth.

West has cautiously subtitled his biography *Aspects of a Life*. The aspects that he has chosen seem at first to have been randomly selected—Wells's troubles with various women, his relations with George Gissing, his quarrel with the Fabian Society—but in fact they have common elements. They are all occasions in which Wells behaved badly, like—to use his own phrase—"a little Cockney cad." West's aim in re-telling them, it becomes clear, is to redeem his father's name, and to make him the

"Economic policy involves much more than finding the best path to a clear objective," writes Albert Rees. "There are many important objectives of policy, including full employment, stable prices, the growth of output, and a greater equality in distribution of income. These diverse goals are related to one another by a complicated and largely unknown system of trade-offs, such that one can advance toward one objective only by sacrificing progress toward others." For those who would like to understand how choices are made among goals and what instruments are available for attaining them, this is the book.

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hero of his own misdeeds. But the writer who does that is not writing biography—he is mythmaking.

West's own term for such a maker of personal myths is "fabulist." In the course of an attack on Dorothy Richardson, who was Wells's mistress just before Amber Reeves (who came just before Rebecca West), West describes a fabulist as one of "those people who deal with unacceptable truths, by modifying them again and again until they have been transformed into more negotiable material." That is an excellent account of what West himself has done: he has fabulized his parents—and himself.

In his fable, Rebecca West becomes a monster of maternal cruelty, determined to injure her son in every possible way, pursuing him through his adolescence and into his maturity, blighting his career, and in the end disinheriting him out of pure malice. Wells becomes the good man fallen among thieves, an innocent victim, like the son, of the groundless malevolence of others. West's account of the Amber Reeves affair is a good example of how the fabulating works. In this episode, Wells seduced the daughter of one of his colleagues in the Fabian Society while she was still an undergraduate, got her pregnant, and then encouraged her to marry another man, but to continue their affair. These facts became widely known, and there was a certain amount of criticism of Wells's behavior; West regards it all as cruel persecution. "Nothing else in his adult experience," he writes,

> . . . was to affect him more deeply than the public scandal that was made of his affair with Amber Reeves. Everything that could be done to make a man think ill of himself was done to him while it was at its height, and for another two years after it he was to be showered with gratuitous slights and insults.

There is no suggestion here that perhaps Wells *ought* to have thought ill of himself after such a sleazy business, or that the slights were justified, or that he had done far more to Amber Reeves than society did to him.

Another bit of fabulating concerns the role that West assigns to himself in the story. He does not figure at all in his father's own autobiography, and it seems pretty clear that Wells didn't really give much time or thought to Rebecca's boy. But he is seldom absent from his own version of the story. Indeed, his filial role provides the basic structure of his book: it begins with his birth, and ends with a touching moment of father-son affection in 1928. This is nearly twenty years before Wells's death, and it seems an odd place to end a biography; but the deathbed scene between them (which West describes midway through the book) had no affection in it, and so could not provide the concluding paternal note that West requires, to make his father *really* a father, and *his*.

THE SAME fabulating mind is apparent when one looks at the rest of the cast of characters. To West, William Morris was a coward, Gissing a sadist, Shaw a "coldly cruel man," Beatrice Webb a woman of "limited intelligence." All of these are absurd judgments, made, it seems obvious, to lower the intellectual skyline of the time, so that Wells will tower above all others. But the effect is quite contrary: one feels that a biographer who is capable of such judgments as these cannot be trusted to judge anyone fairly, including his father. And so the authority of the book collapses.

Another problem of authority arises from West's habitual claim to superior powers of intuition. The text is full of phrases like "I cannot believe," "My bet would be," "I am convinced," "My guess is," "I suspect that"—and one wants to know why these stabs at the truth should be taken seriously. West's answer seems to be: "Because I'm Wells's son," which scarcely seems adequate. Occasionally his confidence in his own instincts even leads him to invent a scene, which then becomes a crucial point in his father's life. In his account of how Wells in his youth became a pupil-teacher he even rejects his father's own account in his *Experiment in Autobiography* in favor of his own wholly fictional version, and elsewhere he invents a suicide attempt by his grandfather. The latter in particular is quite vividly imagined—West is a good novelist—but as biography it just won't do.

How good a novelist West is, any reader can discover in *Heritage*, which now reappears some thirty years after its first publication, with a new introduction by the author. Here West tells the story of his parents in a slightly veiled fictional form, and tells it better than he does in *Aspects of a Life*—not because this telling is truer, but because

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"Cook brings to the subject a fresh point of view, a skeptical attitude, and a strong style. He is a thorough journalist whose book may anger the Brecht establishment . . . This corrective study may be essential to a full understanding of Brecht."

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the novel form allows him to fabulize more freely. The new introduction is simply another statement of the old grievances—how his mother was cruel, and how he has not forgiven her, even in her grave. It is, to my mind, an unpleasant and unnecessary piece; but the novel itself is a very good read, quite apart from its revenges.

"Time softens all things," West says, with heavy irony, in his introduction. Obviously it doesn't; nor does it clarify much, in a case like this one. Here are the characters in this soured family romance: the father who, like many another married man, goes back to his wife, and on to other women; the mother, abandoned and bitter, and resentful of her son's burdensome presence; the son, resentful that his father is absent, and that his mother is not. In such stories, how does one find the truth, or even know for sure what truths one is seeking? We must be content with what we have: scrupulous biographies by outsiders like Gordon Ray and the MacKenzies, and the fables of the participants.

West's book adds to the fables, rather than to the biographies. There are passages of extraordinarily good writing in it—moments when West's imagination is engaged in living back through his father's life. They are usually the most fictive passages—a scene constructed from a faded photograph, the imagined moment of his father's birth—and they suggest what is obviously the case, that this is not a biography but the creating of an absent father, a father who emerges, in spite of his son's efforts, not as a hero but as a more complex man, a genius who was also a great Cockney cad.

SAMUEL HYNES

Samuel Hynes, professor of English at Princeton University, is the author of *The Auden Generation* (Viking), recently reprinted in paper by Princeton University Press.

UNCOMMON CHARACTERS

Dear Mr. Capote
by Gordon Lish

(Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 258 pp., $15.95)

What I Know So Far
by Gordon Lish

(Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 162 pp., $14.95)

Mention Gordon Lish and most readers will think of short stories, logically enough. Gordon Lish was fiction editor at *Esquire* for a number of years, and has edited three short story anthologies. This is what makes it so odd that of the two books he has written—a novel published last year and a collection of stories published this month—it's the novel that's the stunner.

Dear Mr. Capote is a letter of proposal: Would Truman Capote, the "famous celebrity," consider writing the authorized biography of the man who is randomly murdering young women on the streets of New York? Norman Mailer has already turned the offer down. Our letter-writer—who is, of course, the murderer himself—cannot forget this, and refers to it repeatedly throughout the book. "Norman muffed it," he tells us, and, "Let's face it, the nervy s.o.b. played himself right out of the picture!" and finally, "Face facts. Norman could see how this was over his head!"

Crazy, right? Well, naturally. We assume that much from the start, when we're dealing with a mass murderer. But we assume it in a summary, remote, dismissing way, cataloguing him: one more case in a textbook. Then all at once we're face to face with the actual man, very close up—with his scary single-mindedness, with the brilliant glitter in his eye. He pushes in upon us. The room in which we're reading becomes uncomfortably close.

And he talks. Does he ever talk! He has a speech pattern that's both comical and dreadful; it grates on the nerves; it's so distressingly familiar that we almost turn to look for the madman behind our armchairs. "This is a person which is reliable talking," he says. He says he kills women because their brains are closer to the surface, and then he asks, "So what do you think? I mean, you think you can use it or not?" He introduces his statements with "Hey" and "Listen" and "Okay," or (when he thinks he's being subtle) "Hint:." He follows them with "Am I right or am I right?" He brackets his jokes between "(joke)" and "(ha ha)." He calls himself "yours truly," he refers to Truman Capote as "present company," and he likes to imagine his book being plugged on "Johnny." He is insufferable, and the miracle is that by the end of the book we honestly do feel for him.

And what brings this about? Well, Gordon Lish's superb control, for the most part—an inspired sense of exactly when to unreel which thread of the story. When the letter-writer reveals his past, he first alludes to a moment so cryptically that we're baffled; then he passes on to other moments; then he returns to the first and enlarges upon it like a theme in a piece of music. A street fight he once witnessed; his mother's preference for a neighbor child long ago; the goriest of his murders; his adolescent interludes with a 13-year-old girl to whom sex meant power; his dutiful, lusterless couplings with his wife, T. C.; his conversations with his son on a C.B. radio . . . And finally, when all of these elements have begun to swirl together indistinguishably, we discover that we're caught in the swirl ourselves. We're no longer outsiders.

By contrast, the characters in the short story collection, *What I Know So Far*, remain peculiarly distant. The single exception is the narrator of "Guilt," which is a strong and affecting study of a boy grown just past the curls-and-dimples stage whose mother finds a neighbor child more beautiful. (Yes, just like the mother in *Dear Mr. Capote*.) But the other stories—seventeen of them—seem less stories than "turns," in the theatrical sense. The author steps forward, presents a little piece, and retreats. Next, please.

"For Rupert—with No Promises" is his J. D. Salinger turn. ("Wall-to-wall cigars and three packs of Raleighs a day for almost twenty-five years, and I get cancer of the goddamn *spleen*," a character says. And "He could be the Presi-

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dent of the United goddamn *States*, or change the theory of zero, and *this* won't stop him. My being dead, I mean—my dying.")

And speaking of J. D. Salinger, we also have "For Jeromé—with Love and Kisses," which is a letter to "Jaydeezie darling, dear cutie fellow, sweetheart, cutie guy" from the man who keeps calling himself "I your father." Mr. Salinger Senior lives at the Seavue Spa Oceanfront Garden Arms and Apartments in Florida with his neighbors Mrs. Roth, Mr. and Mrs. Bellow, Mr. and Mrs. Malamud, the Elkins, the Potoks . . . oh, and poor, poor Gert Pinkowitz, whose son Thomas had to go and "get cute" and change his name to Pynchon. This is entertaining for a while, but when you come right down to it it's just a very long dialect joke—albeit one with a powerful punch line.

Then there are the more serious pieces. "Fear: Four Examples" describes in three pages the various kinds of anguish, both grand and trivial, that the father of a daughter can experience. "How to Write a Poem," while it dumps us with a thud at the end, has at its core an ingenious, mad, deceptively reasonable idea. The narrator is a poem-stealer; he's good at detecting the moment in a poem when the poet has suddenly "seen it coming at him—an ordinary universe, the itemless clutter of an unraveling world."

> Maybe I don't like poets—or people. But I just love to catch a poet at it, and then to test myself against the thinglessness that made him cut and run. What I do is I pick it up where the poet's nerve dumped him, where he just couldn't stand to see there's still nothing in a place where something never was.
>
> It's no big deal. You just face down what he, in his chickenheart, couldn't. Then you type your version up and sign your name. Next thing you do is get it printed as your own, sit back and listen to them call you brave.

On occasion, a story's briefness is its only drawback: "How to Write a Novel" has much of the eerie, sad quality of *Dear Mr. Capote*, except that it's over and done with so quickly we can't fully experience it. "Two Families" reads like a writer's preliminary notes for a plot—and only the very sketchiest of notes, scrawled on the back of a matchbook. In fact, several of these stories are so skeletal, so elliptical, so connect-the-dots that readers feel overworked. Wait a minute, we want to say, who's getting paid for telling this?

"This is my first major rule," says the hero of *Dear Mr. Capote*. "Think a thing all the way through. I say you have not thought it through enough when you come out on the same side you started on." For Gordon Lish, ironically, the novel seems to be the form in which he does his best thinking-through. *What I Know So Far* is a hit-and-run book. *Dear Mr. Capote* hits and stays.

ANNE TYLER

CITIES OF THE DEAD

The Architecture of Death: The Transformation of the Cemetery in Eighteenth-Century Paris by Richard A. Etlin

(M.I.T. Press, 441 pp., $37.50)

Burial practices and burial monuments are always fascinating. Richard Etlin's *The Architecture of Death* has chosen a particularly striking moment in the history of funerary architecture, the creation of the urban cemetery in late eighteeth-century France. Earlier Christian practice was to bury people as close as possible to a church: the rich in their own church, chapel, or mausoleum, the poor in the churchyard. Old churches were paved with tombstones. By the mideighteenth century in France this no longer seemed appropriate. The churchyards of Paris were full and the population, both living and dead, was growing. In 1765 the Parlement of Paris issued the first of a series of decrees restricting burial in churches; in 1780 the main city burial ground at the Hospital of the Innocents was declared a hazard to public health and closed.

The hygienic problems posed by the urban dead were much discussed at the time. Etlin accepts the official explanations without further ado. Sanitation, however, was only part of the problem. The city of the living had embraced an image of cleanliness as a metaphor for order, and the old burial grounds of Paris—inadequate, smelly, and unsanitary—were a manifestation of disorder at the heart of the social fabric. Assessing the situation, the French concluded that the dead, like the sick and the criminal, belonged in their own institution.

ARCHITECTS at the French Academy immediately rose to the challenge and over the next fifty years sponsored competitions for cemeteries. Etlin has found and published many of these projects, and explained their design and symbolism. His discussion would have been clearer, however, if he had placed the projects in a more general context. At a time when all social life was being classified into institutions, each a microcosm of the larger social order, architects relentlessly pursued an ideal image of human society: a clear geometrical framework, a central monument to authority, a careful ordering of human activity around it. Very often their plans started from a grid or a circle with a cruciform element of four equal arms inside it—not because the cross was a Christian symbol, but because it described a coherent and regular division of space, a perfect order. This architectural metaphor was as old as the ideal cities of the Renaissance, but it came into its own in the eighteenth century when everything began to look like an ideal city.

The projects for cemeteries are remarkably like all the other institutions designed by the architects of the time, especially their prisons and hospitals. The uniformity does not signify failure of imagination; architects showed great ingenuity as they ransacked the Western tradition for motifs and symbols. It shows, rather, a veritable obsession with order. Of course, the trouble with utopian architecture is the client. Users are likely to object to the planner's vision of their welfare. Perhaps this was the attraction of the cemetery; for an ideal city, the dead must have seemed the ideal client.

The practical need for Parisian burial grounds was urgent, but Etlin's insistence that the designs were direct re-

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sponses to it is not entirely convincing. Most projects were so grandiose that they could never have been built. They were architects' visions for other architects: monuments of design, not of architecture. Etlin rightly includes Etiene Louis Boullée's Cenotaph for Newton, as well as his cemetery designs, in his book; but the Cenotaph is a memorial, not a cemetery, and it perfectly represents a glorification of genius, a new secular view of creation.

This project has hypnotized historians and architects. The huge, partly submerged masonry sphere, lit by day by sunlit stars punctured in the vault, and lit by night like an artificial sun (Boullée did not say with what fuel), seems a perfect symbol of the Enlightenment. Even more, its celebration of the genius of the architect cast its spell from Corbusier to the post-moderns. The fact that the Cenotaph for Newton, then as now, was completely unbuildable, or that it envisaged a scale of observer to building roughly equivalent to that of a cockroach in the Lincoln Tunnel, need not diminish our admiration for Boulée's conception. It matters, however, when we assume architecture to be a reflection of society. The academic cemetery projects, in other words, belong first to the ideal world of the eighteenth-century architect; their relation to the ideals of society is not simple or obvious.

LIVING with such symbols was another story. It is to Etlin's credit that he includes social commentary of the time even though it undermines his thesis that architects' designs embody social aims. Parisians did not rush to build the architects' ideal cities of the dead. They did not even recognize themselves in the designs. "Architecture is devouring us," wrote one commentator. In the minds of social reformers, the programs for cemeteries were framed in different terms. The dead had needs and they had rights, like the right to a pleasant spot, to personal dignity. The body of a virtuous maiden should not be forced to lie with a dead ruffian dumped on top of her, as happened in the communal graves of the old Parisian burial grounds. Above all, the dead required continued admiration and attention from the living. No one was too poor to be loved by his family or to be deprived of attention at his grave. The dead belonged together; as in society, each should have his place.

Just how to organize this preoccupied reformers. Like the architects, they assumed a hierarchy—there could be no order without it—but they wondered if this should be based on equality, social status, achievement, or virtue. Most tried to imagine some sort of cemetery that achieved decency for all, with a little extra for the privileged. Etlin cites a revealing comment from the time: since death erased all distinctions, all the more reason that the cemetery must not make matters worse and efface the memory of distinctions in life. From this vantage point, a burial ceased to be a memento mori, an insistent reminder of the brevity of life and the certainty of death, and became an institution of remembrance, a history lesson in the collective life of humanity. The absence of life was transformed into the presence of memory.

WHAT SHOULD a cemetery look like? In the most interesting part of his book, Etlin shows how the English picturesque garden, where Nature and an Arcadian life were artificially re-created, came to include memorials to worthies, dead friends, and relatives. English ideas found expression in France in the vast picturesque landscape created for the Marquis de Giradin at his estate at Ermenonville in the 1770s. There he prepared a tomb for his friend Jean-Jacques Rousseau on a little artificial island shaded by poplar trees. In this tranquil spot in the bosom of nature, hoards of visitors came to pay their respects, and to experience death as a return to nature. The setting of Rousseau's tomb became the popular image for the cemetery.

Etlin does not say so, but architects did not figure prominently in shaping the new conception of the garden or of the cemetery that evolved from it. From the beginning in England, this was in the hands of aristocratic patrons with their own ideas. French architects especially found it difficult to integrate nature into their aggressively man-made visions. A few stiff trees instead of columns was usually the best they could do. Some of their designs are rather funny. About 1800, Michel-Barthélemy Hazon designed a private cemetery for himself and his wife around a pyramid set in a picturesque clearing among the trees. The pyramid was traditional, a favorite symbol of death and a standard feature of the grandiose projects. But Hazon's private version was naturalized, built of sod with fuzzy grass and a tree sprouting from the top. He soon thought better of it, however, and extended the plan, marshaled the forest, and shaved the pyramid to bring his cemetery into line with architectural values.

The utopian vision of the cemetery and the picturesque image of an ideal grave were roughly contemporary in France during the later years of the ancien régime. They did not come together with social reform until the beginning of the nineteenth century. For fifty years the muddy, disreputable burial ground beneath Montmartre and the abandoned stone quarries under the city served as cemeteries, while the arguments went on. Then the enterprising Prefect of the Seine, Nicholas Frochot, acquired a great estate just outside Paris to develop into Père Lachaise, the first modern cemetery of Paris.

Père Lachaise was a hybrid: a picturesque garden beautifully sited on the slopes of a hill with winding roads, forest paths, and natural prospects, all loosely grouped around a rigid espla-

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nade with neoclassical landmarks taken from the architectural tradition. It was first laid out by a pupil of Boullée's, Alexandre-Théodore Brongniart, but it was the wheeling and dealing Frochot (whose role is brought out most fully in Frederick Brown's brisk and stimulating little book, *Père Lachaise, Elysium as Real Estate*) who made Père Lachaise an immediate and stunning success. The pastoral image of a city of the dead became more articulate as tombs of historical characters like Abelard and Héloïse were moved into it and famous generals (and others further down the social scale) elected to be buried there. This was no accident. According to Brown, Frochot scoured Paris for prestigious bones to set the right tone for his development. By the 1820s Père Lachaise was one of the sights of Paris.

Père Lachaise gave Parisians a satisfactory image of the cemetery, although few could expect to share it. The space reserved for free paupers' graves was small compared with the landscape given over to personal monuments, which soon lined the streets and jostled for position among the trees. Mini-estates a few meters wide, with diminutive palaces clearly labeled *en perpétuité*, staked their claims in the landscape. Eventually, like all prime real estate, Père Lachaise was built up. Today it is a populous place, filled with the graves of the famous and the monuments of the rich and vain in every style the nineteenth century could provide, inscribed with all sorts of wishes for remembrance and peace. With its streets and squares, its permanent and temporary housing (perpetual land grants were very expensive, hence temporary vaults for ashes in the columbarium), Pére Lachaise actually became, in a way that its architects never dreamed of, a city of the dead. The dead suffered from urban crowding.

CATHERINE WILKINSON

Catherine Wilkinson teaches at Brown University.

DEFENSE, NOT DETERRENCE

Weapons and Hope
by Freeman Dyson

(Harper & Row, 334 pp., $17.50)

Is nuclear disarmament desirable? A case can be made that it is not. A disarmed world would still be made up of sovereign countries. They would still quarrel. They would still want weapons to pursue their interests and defend themselves. Sooner or later one or another would move to re-acquire nuclear weapons. This would start a new arms race, which might be more dangerous than the present one because the first country to get the bomb might be tempted to use it while others were still unable to retaliate. To this argument Freeman Dyson, a physicist at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, has a response. The response is the main theme of his gracefully written book, which is one of the most interesting and provocative of the many on the subject of nuclear weapons that have been published in the last few years.

It is not the only theme. The book is not a straightforward presentation of the author's preferred nuclear weapons policies. It is a miscellany of information about nuclear weapons, observations about twentieth-century history, personal reminiscences, and musings on the spirit in which the world should approach the dangers that these weapons pose. It is in fact a collection of brief essays, which are by turns personal, analytical, and philosophical. Threaded through them, however, is the conviction that the world must give up nuclear weapons and a particular view of how this can occur.

Dyson advocates the development and deployment of small, relatively inexpensive, simple systems of defense against nuclear attack. He envisions ground-based rockets that could destroy incoming nuclear weapons without using nuclear explosives themselves, which would be guided by information from reconnaissance satellites in space. Such systems of defense could not hope to repel a large-scale attack by offensive nuclear weapons of the kind both the United States and the Soviet Union can now mount. But Dyson wants the two nuclear giants (and the other countries that have these armaments) to reduce their stockpiles of nuclear weapons as the defensive systems are put in place, until all are finally gone. A nation with the defenses that Dyson advocates would thus be protected against blackmail or attack by a country with a handful of nuclear explosives. The world would have shifted from arrangements whereby peace depended on the unchallenged superiority of offensive nuclear forces to safety through the dominance of non-nuclear defensive systems. Defense, in Dyson's view, can make nuclear disarmament possible.

This is an attractive vision. It offers an alternative to the present reliance for our safety on the threat to incinerate millions of people. While difficult to achieve, it is nonetheless not hopelessly utopian. It presents a way of abolishing nuclear weapons without creating a huge, all-powerful global authority to police the disarmed world, a prospect as frightening as it is unlikely.

Dyson's vision also offers a way of abolishing nuclear weapons without abolishing war. Several of the personal reminiscences and historical anecdotes bear on this point. Dyson tells how his father devised a method for teaching the art of throwing a grenade during World War I; how he himself abandoned a youthful commitment to pacifism in World War II; how J. Robert Oppenheimer applied himself with enormous energy and skill to the task of organizing the Manhattan Project. The message that emerges, perhaps aimed at the members of the antinuclear weapons movement whose experience of war is confined to Vietnam, is that the impulse to fight is deeply embedded in human nature and is not always ignoble.

The position to which Dyson hopes the United States and the Soviet Union will move does not require an end to the development and refinement of military equipment. To the contrary, further experimentation and innovation will be needed to perfect the means of defense against modest nuclear attacks. Here he finds cause for optimism. Some nuclear weapons have already become technologically obsolete. Large, power-

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ful explosives have been made unnecessary by sophisticated mechanisms of guidance that can steer smaller bombs close enough to their targets to destroy them. There is a movement in military technology, he believes, toward guile based on ever more sophisticated techniques of processing information and away from brute force. "The computer revolution," he writes hopefully, "is chipping away at the supremacy of nuclear weapons," paving the way for a world in which the weapons themselves have been outlawed and international tranquility rests on the assurance of protection against attack, not, as is the case today, on the likelihood of crushing, horrible retaliation in response to one.

It will not be easy to get from the nuclear threats of today to the nuclear weapon-free world of tomorrow. The technical obstacles to exchanging our present arrangements for those that Dyson recommends are formidable. As he himself admits, it is not certain that the kinds of defenses he urges can be developed. He does not favor building large, expensive space-based systems of ballistic missile defense that are now under discussion and that are often called "Star Wars" schemes. This approach, he believes, belongs to the history of what he calls "technical follies," elaborate military plans that fail to work, at great cost to those who rely on them. There is no assurance, however, that smaller, simpler systems with modest aims will work either; and it is in the nature of military technology that whether or not they will work probably cannot be known until it is too late.

The political problems in moving to a world of defense dominance are even more formidable. On the one hand, the most significant nuclear arms control agreement yet concluded, the 1972 treaty that effectively prohibits ballistic defense by the two main nuclear powers, would have to be discarded; on the other hand, there would have to be much more extensive cooperation between the United States and the Soviet Union than they have ever managed and than there is any reason to expect them to achieve. The suspicions and impulses for rivalry that are inherent in relations between any two powerful countries would have to be suppressed. The Soviet Union, moreover, is not just any powerful country. It is, if not the focus of evil in the world, certainly an empire and not an especially benign one judging from the persistence with which its inhabitants attempt, both individually and collectively, to leave it. The enormous concentration of force, including nuclear force, that the men in Moscow command guarantees the borders of the Soviet Union and the reach of Soviet control beyond them. These men and their successors will not be anxious to give any of it up.

There is a final problem. If an arms race should begin in the non-nuclear world that Dyson envisions it would not be long before the rival powers had accumulated enough nuclear weapons to overwhelm the systems that he hopes will be constructed. His defenses would afford the world some time, some room to maneuver, between the end of disarmament and the beginning of a balance of terror. But the period might be short; and in any case his scheme cannot eliminate completely the dangers that underlie the case against disarmament.

Dyson is aware of the difficulties. He does not believe the arrangements that he favors can be realized soon. Fifty years is the span of time he offers as the transitional period. Nor does he believe that they can be put in place easily. He takes the title of his book from a draft of the American Bishops' Pastoral Letter on War and Peace, which says: "Hope is the will to struggle against obstacles even when they appear insuperable." Nor does he offer anything more than the sketchiest account of how these arrangements might be brought into being. That is not his purpose. He intends to provide what he calls a "concept" for the nuclear age, by which he means a state of affairs toward which the ongoing evolution of the hardware and the doctrines of nuclear weapons ought to be directed. His concept is defense with disarmament. His message is that defense is desirable. Whether it is feasible is a different question. At the end of the book he refers to Odysseus, who knew his destination if not precisely the path that would take him to it. Dyson has suggested a destination for nuclear weapons. His book is an invitation to begin the discussion of whether it is the proper one and if so how the world can get there.

MICHAEL MANDELBAUM

Michael Mandelbaum is the author of three books about nuclear weapons, the most recent of which is *The Nuclear Future* (Cornell University Press).

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SOCIAL CLIMBERS, FAMILY BLUNDERS

Three Novels: The Blackmailer, A Man of Power, The Great Occasion by Isabel Colegate

(Viking, 567 pp., $25, Penguin, $8.95)

To the uninitiated, the comedies of manners which England's lady novelists have specialized in for centuries must look something like the English garden: intricately plotted, pleasingly clipped and symmetrical, but a bit too tame, too pretty. American reviewers tend to lavish upon novels of this genre (what might be called the Jane Austen school of English letters, since she is invariably invoked) such adjectives as "luminous," "elegant," "skillful," "elegiac"—as if to say, "She's very good, if you like that sort of thing." In fact, increasing numbers of readers here seem to like it very much, as commercial publishers—always quick to respond to the vagaries of the American reading public—are beginning to discover. Dial Press/Doubleday's Virago Modern Classics feature the fiction of a few dozen women British novelists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, such as Elizabeth Taylor and Rosamond Lehmann. Several years ago Dutton began to reissue Barbara Pym's novels; Harper & Row's paperback imprint, Perennial Library, followed; and three are currently being offered in one volume by Quality Paperback Book Club. In 1980 Viking Press imported an author virtually unknown to Americans, with the publication of Isabel Colegate's ninth novel, *The Shooting Party*. And this month Viking/Penguin comes out with an omnibus edition of her first three: *The Blackmailer* (originally published in England in 1958), *A Man of Power* (1960), and *The Great Occasion* (1962).

The Shooting Party—the story of a pheasant hunt and an inadvertent murder at a sprawling country estate in Oxfordshire just before the outbreak of World War I—received an exuberant reception here, and can fairly be characterized as of the Jane Austen school. It is indeed luminous, elegant, skillful, elegiac—and, to my mind at least, both rarefied and dull. Not so Colegate's first three works of fiction. Twenty-five years ago she showed little of Austen's circumspection—or Taylor's narrowness or Pym's fastidiousness—as she exposed some decidedly impolite truths about polite society in contemporary England.

These three novels are remarkable not so much for their themes—the standard British sardonic blend of love and power and class—as for their verve and versatility. They are the work of a young writer (Colegate was in her twenties when she wrote them) with an unfaltering voice, a distinctive comic sensibility, and a sure moral vision. Moreover, a clear progression can be seen as she moved from one novel to the next, experimenting with various methods and points of view. All concern self-made men—ambitious, intelligent, self-consciously cultivated, and personally tormented. And all teach their own wry lessons in humility, for Colegate can no more resist piercing inflated pride than hypocritical social convention.

Her first novel—whose hero, a young lawyer and novice blackmailer, is deluded in his belief that he can worm his way into the higher reaches of society by his own cleverness—is a broad social comedy. In the course of his plotting, Baldwin Reeves discovers to his astonishment that his brazen wickedness is no match for the subtle evils of his social superiors. Colegate's second, *A Man of Power*, which focuses on an immensely wealthy property tycoon whose determination to marry a beautiful and aristocratic (and, as it turns out, venomous) socialite leads to a suicide and several shattered lives, is a highbrow suspense novel. In it a young girl moves from passive observations of, and unwitting participation in, the sordid carryings-on of her elders to active rejection of them. The third novel, *The Great Occasion*, is a melodrama of family strife, with an overbearing patriarch at

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its center. Gabriel Dobson, unlike the heroes of the first two, is an older man who has honorably entered the world of the well connected—only to learn that his personal life is as empty as the standards he so religiously adheres to. As Colegate's interests narrowed from a desire to crack the social code to a determination to probe the contradictions of character, her talents as a novelist expanded.

In many ways *The Blackmailer* is a traditional social satire. Its central character is a bungling schemer. Baldwin fixes on a plan that he believes will avenge him on the man whom he has most admired and despised: he decides to blackmail Judith Lane, the widow of his war companion, a golden boy with charm, money, and status who died what is thought to be a hero's death in Korea. Baldwin knows the truth about Anthony Lane's part in the war—he was a coward and a traitor—and is determined to profit from it. But he botches the scheme terribly. First, he fails to reckon on Judith's army of supporters (including a fierce French midget, who acts as her manservant and protector; her eccentric boss at the publishing house, who offers to arrange for a hired gun to dispense with Baldwin; and Lane's doddering grandfather, who immediately pegs Baldwin as a "most regrettable character"). Second, and more disastrously, he falls in love with Judith, and he finds himself caving in to tenderness when he should be at his most ruthless, and reasserting his brutishness when he should be succumbing to his softer side. In the process he loses both the blackmail money and Judith.

COLEGATE is as astute about the psychological underpinnings of her characters' behavior as she is about their comic potential. This can be seen most clearly in Baldwin, whom she invests with a perspicacity and self-knowledge that the others—including the cool, cerebral Judith—lack. Some of the most charming figures in fiction, as in life, are those who are fearlessly honest about themselves. Baldwin is a fat, greedy, friendless self-seeker who is hopelessly inept with women. Yet his cheerful acknowledgment of his faults makes him oddly endearing—even, despite herself, to Judith. Amidst all of the humorous subplots and byways of this novel, Colegate carefully follows the erratic intimacy that develops between victim and tormentor, and by the end their roles have reversed: the priggish Judith has become Baldwin's tormentor and Baldwin has shown her the meaning of moral courage. Only once does Baldwin venture to kiss her, unsuccessfully, of course. A standard feature of Colegate's characters is an intense self-consciousness which makes spontaneity impossible. For all their anguished introspection, they are ill equipped to cope with the crises, however small, which periodically disrupt every life—conventional and unconventional alike.

After the first shock, and the first acute pleasure, Judith found herself prolonging the kiss because she could not think of what to say after it. She drew back.

"We understand each other," said Baldwin, who looked shaken. "You must see, we understand each other, even when we don't want to. Haven't you felt that?"

Judith, nodding, allowed her head to incline towards, though not actually rest upon, his shoulder. He gave a small moan, and would have kissed her again. The moan, however, had been a mistake: it jarred, and Judith, anyway calmer, suddenly pushed him away. . . .

EXERCISE

Chary with gym fear
after years of flinching from the hurled ball,
roundshouldered by semesters spent
in terror of the somersault,

I enter the church basement
in my skimpy warm-ups . . . A friendly,
non-athletic smell of tomato vegetable soup
lingers from Senior's Roundtable.

Twice a week for an hour's
not nearly enough for anyone serious
or strict . . . I relax. There are the stout women,
two with after-work cocktails on their breath.

The Sunday School has snipped out
orange, pink, and turquoise leaves to hang
from real branches arranged in pineapple juice cans.
The room is decked with leaves that do not fall.

Now our instructor
dashes out of her street clothes and high-heeled boots!
She's like a female Clark Kent!
Her breasts balloon with health

but her ankles are hopelessly heavy.
I can see the class agree—
not sexy. When we form two ragged lines,
they're ragged by design.

Then I'm on the floor, stretching,
lunging, lifting . . . Some have rhythm,
a knack for the music. I try not to look,
content that no one's watching me,

but I look . . . at a melancholy portrait
of Christ staring down at us,
and a treacherous winter landscape
someone thought "pretty"—
trees and a house overwhelmed by snow. . .

JOYCE PESEROFF

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He walked away from her quickly, angry with himself, not because of the kiss, which impetuous though it had been he certainly did not regret, but because of the moan he had made, which had been the cause of her pushing him away. She had been quite right, and for the first time he not only admired, he really respected her. It was not the way he was used to women behaving, but he was quite aware himself of its having been an insincere moan, and as such an insult to her intelligence. . . .

In retrospect his mistake became more and more embarrassing. The hateful little sound seemed hideously vulgar: it was the sort of thing Anthony Lane would never have done.

In the end Judith rejects Baldwin, not because he is a cad and a fraud, but because he is unable to do what Anthony Lane did so well: disguise his character flaws. This tension between honest emotion and "proper" behavior takes a different turn in *A Man of Power*, and again in *The Great Occasion*. The social world portrayed in the second novel shares many characteristics with the world of *The Blackmailer*, but this is a largely serious, rather than debunking, examination of the process of self-discovery. Here too the plot is shaped as a contest between the calculated cruelty of a "common" man and the casual cruelty of a society woman; and the man is again beaten at his own game (at least for a time) by a woman who, as Baldwin put it to Judith, "make[s] my attempts at ruthlessness seem naïve." But in *A Man of Power* Colegate is less concerned with the lighter side of evil, and more with the havoc people wreak on others through selfishness and greed.

This novel tells two stories simultaneously: one follows a man's social baptism, the other a girl's coming of age. The man is Lewis Ogden, whose reputation is built on his insatiable search for money and position; the girl is the brainy and insecure debutante, Vanessa Cowper, the daughter of the woman Ogden is determined to marry. We see the drama through the eyes of Vanessa, and believe at first, as she does, that we are witnessing nothing more distressing than the destruction of Ogden's first marriage as he openly spurns his lackluster wife and begins his pursuit of Vanessa's mother. But Vanessa is as ignorant of "the world of grown-ups" as Ogden is of the ways of cultivated women, and they are equally shaken to discover Lady Cowper's treachery.

Vanessa's makes for a far more interesting story. Colegate says in the foreword to *Three Novels* that "the late fifties were . . . the years of the property tycoons," but though Ogden is the ostensible subject of the novel, he is more idea than substance, a social type rather than a fully credible character. The same is true of Lady Cowper and of all the incidental characters—Lady Cowper's young lover Alexander; Ogden's pathetic and finally tragic wife, Jean; Vanessa's weedy socialist friend Colin (who is also Jean's sister and a bitter critic of Ogden)—none of whom excites much interest. Like the lords and ladies of *The Shooting Party*, whose brutal behavior makes a mockery of their civilized banter, they seem little more than wooden tools to convey a moral message and propel the plot. Vanessa, by contrast, an adolescent hovering on the edges of society and adulthood, proves to be a clear-eyed (if naïve) observer of her elders' indiscretions and an unsentimental study in principled behavior.

Thus Vanessa is both the novel's voice and its conscience, as she struggles to come to terms with her changing perceptions of herself and her mother, and of Ogden. (Her infatuation with the man of power evolves into a mutual respect and love as her bedazzled devotion to her mother fades.) When she and Ogden suddenly come upon her mother in the arms of a young tenant, Vanessa's first reaction is typically childlike: "I spent the rest of the afternoon in my room trying to imagine Alexander and my mother in bed together and wondering whether they had laughed at me." But as she mulls over the scene, she begins to formulate a more reasoned and mature impression of what it all means:

I had never imagined her weak or in need before: as for what I now condemned in her, it had seemed her opposite. I could not name what it was that I condemned, and which I suppose was some lack of dignity more than anything else, but I knew that I did condemn it and this frightened me. Then there was the idea quite suddenly of her being depraved, of her being an aging beauty craving for young lovers. . . . If she had been angry at the loss of what she had hoped for from Lewis I should have recognized her more easily, but that she should sob, should wail, should sound so old, for Alexander, that was amazingly strange. Then there was

THE NEW REPUBLIC'S BEST BOOKS

Following is a list of books TNR *has recently reviewed and recommends.*

Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre by Simone de Beauvoir (Pantheon). A portrait of Sartre in his last sad years in his own words and those of his trusted companion. (Reviewed 5/21/84)

The Evolution of Cooperation by Robert Axelrod (Basic). Scientific proof, using computers, that it pays to be nice, not nasty, when it comes to questions of accommodating to others. (5/21/84)

Children in Exile: Poems 1968-1984 by James Fenton (Random House). A British poet's evocations of Germany, Cambodia, and other nightmares. (5/14/84)

Civil Wars by Rosellen Brown (Knopf). A large, intelligent novel about one family's life in the aftermath of 1960s activism. (5/7/84)

Piece of Cake by Derek Robinson (Knopf). An exciting novel about the fortunes of a Royal Air Force squadron fighting Hitler. (5/14/84)

The Truth That Killed by Georgi Markov (Ticknor & Fields). Inside Bulgaria: a posthumous memoir by the émigré who was killed by an umbrella. (5/14/84)

Jinnah of Pakistan by Stanley Wolpert (Oxford University Press). The first major biography of the subcontinent's lesser known hero. (5/7/84)

Writing in a State of Siege: Essays on Politics and Literature by André Brink (Summit). The difficult life of art under the rule of apartheid. (4/30/84)

Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood by Kristin Luker (University of California Press). A sophisticated sociological analysis of the fierce debate. (4/30/84)

Testing the Current by William McPherson (Simon & Schuster). A midwestern world through the eyes of a watchful little boy. (4/30/84)

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the fact that I was her daughter. I still could not tear my thoughts away from myself, and so I thought of my feeling for Lewis and wondered whether I were hereditarily over-endowed with feelings of luxury and concupiscence and whether I should have a long chain of lovers and end an aged harridan buying young men. I looked in the mirror and thought of my face grown old and thought, I am her daughter.

In all of these novels, Colegate is interested both in the ways in which people stumble into moral awareness and in which they shield themselves from it. Frightening as Vanessa's image of herself as the recipient of her mother's tainted genes may be, it alerts her to the dangers of decadence before it is too late. Gabriel Dobson, the blustering hero of her third novel, *The Great Occasion*, is not so perceptive—or so lucky. Gabriel's plight is not expressed in his struggle with the restrictions and fallacies of social convention. On the contrary, he has so fully and so smugly adopted the conventional standards in his own life that he has lost his capacity for independent thought and emotional honesty. In this novel Colegate turns even more sharply from her examination of the destructive forces of demented social ambition and carnal love to those of familial passion. Although the subject is more parochial than that of her first two novels—a story about an older man in the throes of a belated identity crisis, and about his five daughters' unsteady lives—*The Great Occasion* is the most sophisticated and the most compelling of the three. It is not the confines of society which interest Colegate here, but the confines of character; and the view we have is not from the outside looking in, but from the inside—of six diverse characters ranging in age from 10 to 60—peering out.

In *A Man of Power* Vanessa reflects, ". . . it seemed to me that vast regions of shame and fear and secrecy must hide the members of one's family from one, from everyone perhaps except their lovers." This notion becomes a predominant theme in *The Great Occasion*, as Colegate deftly intersperses Gabriel's narrow vision of himself and his family with the widely varied views of his daughters and their husbands. If the late '50s were the years of the property tycoons, they were also the beginning of an era in which children expressed their independence in ways which often confounded their parents. Consumed by his work and the daily degradations of aging, Gabriel has long since relinquished any meaningful control over his girls, and he watches with bemused horror as they go about making a mess of their lives. Susan marries a bigoted military man who slowly drives her mad, and Penelope settles down with an unscrupulous politician. Angel is sleeping around and forming unsavory friendships with homosexuals, and Charlotte goes off to live with an artist more than twenty years her senior.

Selina, the youngest, is the only decent one of the bunch. Like Vanessa, she is as wise and levelheaded—though vulnerable—as her parent is unreliable. While Gabriel is recovering his dignity after a last futile fling with a young widow, Selina is barely surviving her first term at her exclusive boarding school, where she is being both physically and mentally tormented by a particularly sadistic little classmate. Just as his daughters are oblivious to his personal concerns, Gabriel has no desire to explore the regions of shame and fear and secrecy they inhabit. Instead he simply convinces himself that they are all "heartless little wretches" who want nothing from him but his money. One by one, they make it painfully clear just how mistaken he is.

In her foreword, Colegate says that *The Great Occasion* "was the first book of which I drew a diagram before I started to write," and that her chief concern was with "technique—simply the mechanics of carrying forward, and maintaining interest in, a number of characters who are not necessarily in the same place but upon whom there is equal emphasis in the scheme of the novel." It is thus surprising that this novel largely overcomes the mechanistic qualities of the first two, and certainly of her last. The energy which Colegate brought to *The Blackmailer* and *A Man of Power* is the source of their strengths but also of their weaknesses. As *The Great Occasion* attests, a generous imagination need not rely upon a welter of comic props and a succession of startling revelations to sustain the reader's interest. It is not the brisk plot which carries this novel, or the cleverly interlocking ironies and social commentary, but the funny and tragic muddling through of one family.

Colegate downplays the intellectual breadth and wit of her early ventures into fiction. "The four novels I wrote over the next ten years were different, more ambitious and more intense, more nervous perhaps," is the way she prefaces this collection. "Anyway these three seem to me now to be the ones I wrote instinctively and without difficulty; this makes me remember them with indulgence and feel pleased to see them in print again." There is no need to regard them with indulgence. Unlike her clumsy heroes and her youthful heroines, she intuitively understands all about the "hateful little sounds" that social creatures make as they scrabble after the unattainable.

DOROTHY WICKENDEN

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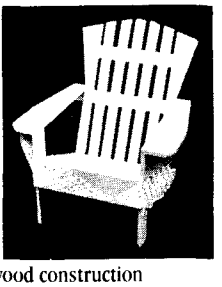

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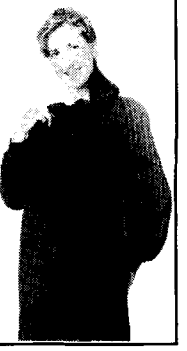

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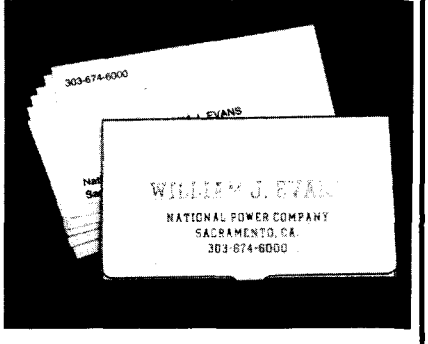

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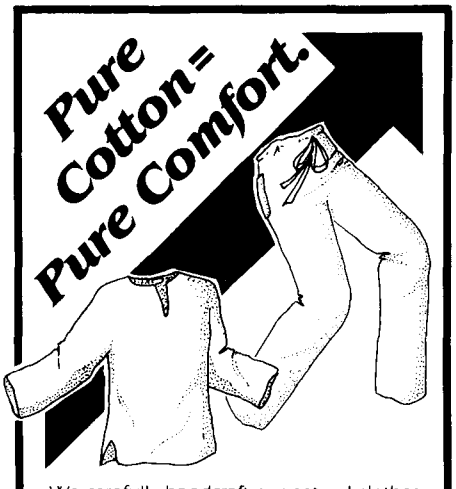

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CAMBRIDGE DIARIST

Campaign Chic

IT'S CAMPAIGN TIME in Massachusetts again, and those of our politicians who are not currently in jail are out vying with each other in frantic displays of doctrinal purity on the fashionable concerns of the day. To please *The Boston Globe* and the Common Cause goo-goos, for example, the Democratic contenders for the U.S. Senate are forgoing PAC contributions and making an issue of who forwent them first. (See "Running from the PACs," page 8.) The only palpable consequence of this ostentatious ritual of self-denial is that these mendicants must now find five individual $1,000 contributors for every rejected $5,000 contribution from a PAC. (Query: Can someone you suspect might sell out for $5,000 be trusted not to sell out for $1,000?) At the same time, the goo-goos have made an unwelcome discovery: it turns out that all those high-minded groups like the Committee for an Effective Congress and the Council for a Livable World, to say nothing of the proliferating Peace PACs, are themselves PACs, plain and simple, to be spurned as if they were not assemblies of idealists but conspiracies of overpaid corporate executives, real estate speculators, oil tycoons, physicians, labor bosses, teachers, and other malefactors against the public good.

THE BIG NEW ISSUE in the Bay State is nuclear-free zones, by which is not meant Central Europe or the Middle East but Cambridge, Lexington, and Amherst. The idea is that if one town after another were to ban nuclear research within town limits, soon there would be no place in America from which to carry on the arms race. This strategy is not likely to succeed, since even the voters of Cambridge turned down the proposal when it was on the ballot in 1983. The fact that the idea is still around is a testament to human ingenuity in a tight corner, like socialism in one neighborhood, and it appeals to the same people. Alas, it appeals also to my candidate, Lieutenant Governor John F. Kerry. Pretty soon every liberal pol in the state will have made his dishonest compromise with this dishonest idea. The idea is getting a heavy push from an organization called CP-PAX, which I ruefully admit to having helped found. CP-PAX—an amalgam of old peace types with somewhat less old participatory democracy types (the "CP" part stands for Citizens for Participation, by the way, not something more sinister)—doesn't swing much weight among the voters, but its benediction does mean some money and cachet. So it was bad news for Representative Edward J. Markey when he ran a poor second in the race for its Senatorial endorsement. The father of the freeze in the House of Representatives (and known to press people as the Congressman from "Nightline"), Markey was after all the designated candidate of Dr. Helen Caldicott, the antinuclear activist who seems to think that slogans like "children ask the world of us" constitute a practical program for disarmament. She has her detractors, and I am one, but you can't deny that she has made her panaceas the *chic*est cause in Boston: celebrities aside, her list of supporters is probably more patrician than that of the Museum of Fine Arts; and this week at the Mother's Day Ball, her black-tie constituency dances for nuclear disarmament to Peter Duchin and his orchestra. What fun.

ALL THIS CHIC availed Markey nothing. More surprisingly, neither did the support of Representative Barney Frank, the most interesting and the funniest politican in the state. Markey was lagging in the polls, and it began to look as if he'd end up third in the September primary, behind Kerry and Representative James Shannon. So he dropped out of the Senate race and scurried back to run for reelection to the House. At his withdrawal press conference, Markey said not a word about being afraid of losing. Instead he talked of how much he had "agonized" about it all. He had earlier "agonized" when he flipped from "pro-life" to "pro-choice" to make himself over from a parochial Congressional candidate to a cosmopolitan Senatorial one. There must be a limit to the amount of televised agonizing any one politican can do in a given year. Maybe Markey had used up his quota.

EVEN PEOPLE who didn't mind Markey's politics had doubts about his sincerity. He had told a training session for Democratic Congressional aspirants that all they needed to know about arms control were a few phrases: "Don't bother about the complicated details; the issue is hot and it's ours." A politician who'd be that casual with the country's destiny can't be expected to be more scrupulous about the fortunes of other politicians or, for that matter, more respectful of the voters of his district. For when Markey took himself out of the Senate race and put himself back into the House race, he gave the state representatives who had spent months campaigning for his Congressional seat exactly three hours to file nominating petitions to seek reelection to the legislature. They would thus in turn upstage or preempt the campaigns of the more junior politicians who had sought, also for months, to succeed those who now wanted to succeed Ed Markey who had once wanted (but now was too frightened to try) to succeed Paul Tsongas. To Markey, his old district was the politician's equivalent of the college-bound senior's safety school: "If I can't make Harvard, there's always Tufts." Markey's constituents may resent this, especially since he has masked his ambition with idealism. There's nothing wrong with ambition per se if you admit to it. But Markey wouldn't. Instead he spouted some blather about the glories of the House (as if he were Tip) and his responsibility for the fate of the freeze there. I confess to an interest in this matter: a friend and former student, Michael Barrett, is one of the talented (and also admittedly ambitious) state reps whose campaign for Congress has been disrupted by Markey's solipsism. Barrett could still run and win as an incumbent for the legislature, but he believes that would be unfair to those who thought him committed to the risk of running for Congress. Which is what, against the odds, he is still doing. His foreign policy politics may be closer to Markey's than they are to mine; but he has none of Markey's narcissism. This is reason enough to prefer him.

M.P.

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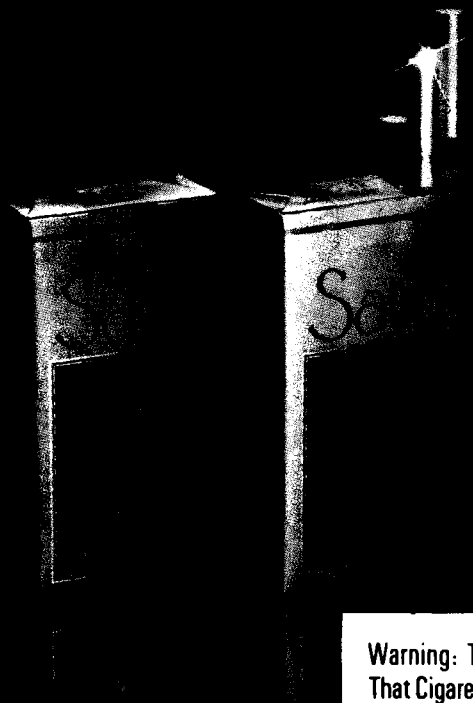

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